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The Chinese Civilization

Hsia to the Ch'in Dynasty

2207 BC-206 BC

AMIT BHATTACHARYYA

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The Chinese Civilization
Hsia to the Ch'in Dynasty
2207 BC-206 BC

Amit Bhattacharyya

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The Chinese Civilization Hsia to the Ch'in Dynasty 2207 BC-206 BC
by : Amit Bhattacharyya

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For Tupur and Tapur, the swift little deer whose joyful, destructive and noisy presence gives me emotional refuge.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

This second edition of the book comes three years after the first. This is an enlarged and substantially revised one. As the readers will see, four new chapters have been added and the others have been revised, partially or substantially. This study is intended to be a three-part one. My initial plan was to take a larger period taking at least the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) in this volume. However, I had to shift from my original plan and take a shorter period. This piece would have been more to my liking had I not been restricted in my academic pursuit because of the car accident on my way back from Gangtok with the students of my department while I was on an educational tour in March this year. It took away a lot of precious time from me over which I did not have any control.

This piece starts from the Hsia and ends with the Ch'in dynasty that built up the first feudal empire in the history of China. It also traces the history from the beginning, from the abode of the Peking Man on the Dragon Bone Hill in Choukoutien not far from the city of Peking to the emergence of the Yangshao Culture (5000 BC) in the vast region from the north-east to south-west and the Longshan Culture (3500 BC) in the north-east. So Part II in this three-part series will start from the Han, hopefully in near future.

In course of making preparations for this book I received support of different types from my friends, colleagues and near and dear ones. My friend Sujato Bhadra lent his entire personal collection of books on China to me for my use on condition that I would return everything without fail. I wrote in his notebook that I was taking the books for good. Needless to state, his material support made my work easier. My colleague, friend and elder brother Prof. Himadri Sankar Banerjee always gave me moral support and almost daily enquired about my progress. I thank my colleagues, Prof. Tridip Chakraborti, Dr. Tilottama Mukherjee, Dr. Suchetana Chattopadhyay and Prof. Nupur Dasgupta for the interest they have shown in my work. Sujata, my daughter, has been supportive throughout, although

she goes on wondering whether and when her father's study will at all come to an end. Mani, Gopa and Debashis, have been sources of constant encouragement to me. The staffs of the National Library, Jadavpur University Library and of Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi have been cooperative throughout. I thank them all. Finally, I thank Tandrita Chandra of the Readers' Service for publishing this book.

This book is meant primarily for the students as also for general readers. If both of them find this book useful, I will feel that my efforts have not gone in vain.

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Dated, Kolkata, August 9, 2010.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The thought of writing a book on the civilization of China occurred in my mind many years ago. I have been teaching the history of modern China at the post-graduate level in Jadavpur University for many years. While teaching this paper, I developed an interest in the history of ancient China—an interest stimulated also by my teaching the history of ancient India at the under-graduate level. Some years back in 2003, the Loreto College, Kolkata, organized a workshop on Ancient Civilizations and I was invited to deliver a lecture on China. I chose Confucius and his ideology—the most lasting ideology ever in any country—as my topic. This gave me encouragement to pursue my study of ancient China.

The Department of History of the University of Calcutta has introduced an optional paper on the Classical Civilizations with China as a component in it. The Department of History of Jadavpur University has introduced optional semester courses on the Social History of Science & Technology, one component of which is ancient China.

Joseph Needham, Sun Tzu and Mao Tse-tung are the sources of my inspiration for undertaking this study. Needham for his monumental and path-breaking work on the "Science and Civilization In China"; Sun Tzu for his "Art of War", a small ancient treatise on military strategy and tactics which is acclaimed as the best in the ancient world; and Mao Tse-tung for his writings, thoughts and contribution to the development of human knowledge and civilization. In some way or other, I owe a lot to them.

This project is divided into three parts. This is the first one. It starts from the beginning, although this beginning is likely to go backwards in time as more and more evidence on the creativity of the Chinese people in the bygone days are coming to light through archaeological discoveries. It ends at the end of the Chou period. The late Chou period was the transitional period from slavery to feudalism in Chinese society. The Chin dynasty which gained control

in China in 221 BC set up the first feudal empire. The second part of this book will start from then on.

This book is meant primarily for both the students and general readers. Experts, I am sure, will have nothing to learn from it. However, I would definitely benefit from their critical observations and suggestions. The same is true for others also. I know I have to wait for some time to realize how the readers have received it.

I thank the Readers Service for publishing the book.

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Dated, 25 May, 2007

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CHAPTER : 1

Man and Environment

The Chinese civilization is one of the earliest civilizations in the history of the world and fit to be compared with the other ancient riparian cultures in such regions as Mesopotamia, Egypt, India or the Mediterranean. However, in terms of continuity and cultural cohesiveness, the Chinese civilization probably stands apart from the rest. It appears that the sheer pressure of human numbers, of countless millions draining and clearing and cultivating the land, has been less in other countries than in this monsoonal land of this part of the eastern world. This long period of uninterrupted human movements, activities and humanization has been portrayed by Robert Payne. In his words, the people of China are like those "whose dust was so intermingled in the soil that they perhaps alone of all nations do not feel themselves strangers to the land. They may curse their land at times, thinking how barren it is and how unprotected from invaders; but it is theirs by a greater rights than ours is ours" (*The White Pony* New York 1960).

Geographically, there is a clear contrast between the north and south of China. The North China plain to the south of Peking where the cradle of the Chinese civilization was located, is dry and cold. During summer, one can see an endless expanse of green fields. On the other hand, South China is relatively warm; there during most parts of the year, rice fields are flooded and the green terrain is hilly. The dry wheat-millet zone of North China and the moist rice-growing zone of the south part company along a line roughly halfway between the Huangho River (Heilongjiang River, 5,464 km in length) and the Yangtze River (Changjiang River, 6,300 km in length) on the thirty-third parallel. Rainfall, soil, temperature, and human usage create striking contrasts between these two economic regions.

The vastness of the land, the complexity of the terrain and the variation in climate, together with the related regional differences in

natural characteristics, combine to make China's natural resources extremely rich and multifarious. The fertile plains produce cereal crops such as wheat, rice, maize, millet, sorghum and soybean as also cash crops like cotton, hemp, sugar and oil-bearing plants. The vast mountain areas provide foodstuffs, tea, tea oil, tung oil, silk, wax and medicinal plants and herms in abundant mercy. Forests offer more than 2,800 species of trees alone, and fauna include about 1,150 bird species, more than 400 species of mammals and 420 species of reptiles and amphibians. In water resources, China stands among the richest. She is endowed with some of the longest and most dangerous rivers of the world, the total volume of flow being around 2,700,000 million cubic metres. Her Yangtze River comes after the Nile and the Mississippi in length with the figure of 6,300 kms.

In the plains of Old China, thus writes Marcel Granet, "two moments are clearly marked. The climate is continental and the alternating rhythm of the seasons has an arresting character. Both short-lived, coming between the hard dry cold of winter and the warm summer damp, the spring and autumn, with their gentle rains and their changing sky, are like two wonderful moments. Nature, at one breath, begins or ceases to live. A sudden blossoming and a quick fall of the leaf, the return and departure in a body of migratory birds, the rapid swarming and disappearance of insects…make a kind of dramatic framework for the changes which the Chinese peasants impose upon themselves after the likeness of their own sky. Thus at one blow they revolutionize their habits. Forgetting, in the confusion of the moment, their everyday interdicts, they feel the necessity of coming to the help of nature, and co-operating amongst themselves" (See his *Chinese Civilization*, London 1957, pp.160-161).

The land of China belongs to the people because it is they who have toiled as food-gatherers and food producers over thousands of years braving natural disasters and innumerable hardships with unflinching determination to transform this vast land into a grain field and the centre of a very rich culture. The vast countryside with its plains, rivers, mountains, broad-leaved evergreen forests and natural resources have become integral parts of the life, habitat and culture of the Chinese people. This long period in the development of culture and socio-economic life through different social stages was attended by intense struggles, violence and bloodshed. Where did it begin?

Traces of habitat of the first inhabitants on Chinese soil were discovered in an area that was 50 kilometres southwest of the city of Peking proper. The abode of the *Peking Man* was located in what is now a small town called Choukoutien. It lies at the southeastern foot of the Western Hills, with imposing mountains to its north and west, and rolling hills on its northeastern fringe. To the south and southeast, the view opens towards the great North China Plain. The Pearl River emerges out of a narrow gorge not far north of Choukoutien to flow through one side of the town. Opposite Choukoutien on the west bank of the Paerh River are two limestone hills in an east-west line. The one to the east, known as Lungkushan or Dragon Bone Hill, has a cave on its northern slope, in which the fossil remains of Peking Man, artifacts, traces of the use of fire and a variety of animal bones were dug out. It was in such an environment that the Peking man hunted in the primeval plains and forests, picked up and made tools and through hard physical labour and prowess began a stubborn struggle with nature. It was from a cave here on December 2, 1929 that Chinese workers and scientists dug up the first complete skull-cap of Peking Man. These fossils roughly belong to the period 500,000 BC to 200,000 BC; hence earlier than the Neanderthal Man of Europe and the Mediterranean. Later fossil remains of the Upper Cave Man, dating back 18,340 years(according to a radio-carbon dating), were found in a cave further up the mountain above the cave of Peking Man. The remains of eight persons of different ages have been found in this cave. They include three complete skulls, fragments of skeletons from a grave, mammalian fossils, bone and stone implements and ornaments such as perforated animal teeth, bivalve shells, stone beads, pebbles and fish bones, as also grooved hollow bones(For more information, see Chia Lan-po, *The Cave Home of Peking Man*, Peking 1975, pp.1-5). In fact, the history of the development of the Peking Man is the history of his struggle with and mastery over nature—his tool making, use of fire, struggle for food and the emergence of human society in an embryonic form.

The total fossil remains of Peking Man unearthed at the Choukoutien cave amount to 6 complete skull caps, 9 skull fragments, 6 pieces of facial bone, 15 mandibles, 152 teeth, 7 fragmented limb bones (humerus, clavicle, lunatum, femur, tibia etc.) belonging to upward of 40 persons. The Choukoutien materials—although

appearing to be insufficient—provide reliable information for the study of the physical characteristics of Peking Man (For details, see *The Cave Home of Peking Man*, pp.23-27).

Could Peking Man speak? The convolutions of his brain as revealed by the model moulded with his skull seem to indicate that he could. In fact, language made its appearance with labour. Man's ability to engage in labour enabled him to begin to transform nature; at the same time, labour demanded that members of a society work together and co-operate; thus language emerged along with the making of tools. How could the first techniques of tool-making have been handed down to posterity, let alone improved upon, without such a means of communication? The language at that stage could only be in an embryonic stage and had to be supplemented with gestures to communicate with one another.

The presence of the Peking Man indicates the presence in north China of a Paleolithic population possessing tool-making skill of a rudimentary type. In fact, thousands of stone implements were found with the fossil of Peking Man and various vertebrates. These artifacts are evidence of his ability to make a wide range of tools, using a variety of methods and materials. The raw materials used by Peking Man for making tools comprised hard minerals and rocks from outside his cave, which included rock crystal, vein quartz, flint, opal, sandstone and quartzite. The stone tools can be roughly classified as choppers, scrappers or knife-shaped tools. Some were suitable for cutting and fashioning wooden hunting clubs, others for cutting animal skins or meat. A great deal of ash, some of it in piles and some in layers, has been discovered in the caves once inhabited by the Peking Man. A great deal of ash, some of it in piles and some in layers, has been discovered in those caves. The ash contains pieces of burnt animal bones and stones of various colours, hackberry seeds and charred Chinese redbud wood, suggesting thereby that the animal meat was often roasted, and that Peking Man was already able to preserve, use and control fir(For more details, see Bai Shouyi ed, *An Outline History of Chin*a, Beijing 1982, pp.30-33).

We do not know how long the Peking Man lived in Choukoutien, whether he moved out to some other habitat or some other cave shelters until, after thousands of years, he came out from the shelter and started settling in other parts of the north-east until through labour

and application of mental faculty, he shook off his savage past and arrived, through a number of stages, in the middle reaches of the Yellow River Valley—the 'cradle area' of the Chinese civilization. There were some intermediary stages also.

About 100,000 years ago, China's ancient culture entered the "Neanderthaloid" stage that falls between the stage of "Apeman" (Pithecanthropine) and "Modern". Although human fossils from this period are distributed widely in the country, the most significant among them are those of "Maba Man", discovered in Qujiang County in the Kwangtung Province of south China; "Changyang Man", found in Changyang County in central China's Hepei Province; and "Dingcun Man", found in Xiangfen County in the Shansi Province of north China. Without going into details, let it be said that their physical appearance was already different from the Peking Man, and that they used more advanced tools and techniques.

It is about 40,000 years ago that China's ancient culture entered the stage of "modern man". Since then, hunting and fishing economy underwent a remarkable advancement and, according to Bai Shouyi, the matriarchal commune gradually took shape. Traces of such human groups have been found in many areas. They are Liujiang Man and Qilinshan Man found in some places of Kwangsi; Hetao Man, found along both banks of the Sjara-osso-gol River in inner Mongolia as also in Ninghsia; the Shiyu Culture that existed 28,000 years ago in the Shansi Province; and the Upper Cave Man who lived about 18,000 years ago in caves near the top of the Dragon Bone Hill at Choukoutian, where Peking Man was discovered. The Upper Cave man's labour experience and skill surpassed that of his predecessors.

Like some other ancient civilizations, the history of China is inseparably linked to the problem posed by rivers that had to be tamed to prevent the ever-threatening floods and to the skill in building canals for drainage, irrigation and transportation. This skill logically developed from the experience in managing the river waters. The cradle area of the Chinese civilization lay in the north-west China, in the villages around Wei and Fen rivers—tributaries of the Huang Ho or 'Yellow River', and in the north China plain, formed by the alluvial sediment of this large and turbulent river, named after its muddy colour "Huangho"—Yellow River(See Cressey George B, *China's Geographic Foundation*, p.134). The river route lies in the north

and west of China. On the north-western side stand the Gobi, Alashan and Ordos deserts with Shansi and Kansu provinces in the north and west, Shensi in the south and then Honan, Hopei and Shantung in the south and east. It was an area the like of which gave birth to other riparian civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus Valley and other parts of the world. Rivers and deserts or semi-desert regions are the two characteristics of early civilizations as D.D. Kosambi would explain. It was an area which produced many attractions for the early man—water, fish, fertile soil, area free from wild animals and insects, with stone and timber close at hand. It was also strategically located at the eastern end of the great transcontinental corridor zone which was subsequently to be known as the 'Silk Road'.

Something more needs to be told about the natural setting, as throughout Chinese history this river has posed China's greatest engineering problem. The north-west and north China plain, the cradle of the Chinese culture, are covered by a special soil called *loess*, which is evident only in a few areas(including India) outside of China. Within China, loess soil is of windblown origin, formed over centuries and millennium by the strong seasonal winds that blow each spring from the high pressure areas of the plateaus of central Asia towards the Pacific Ocean with its less variable temperatures. Passing over the Gobi Desert and the steppe lands of the north-west, the winds collect sand and move on as sandstorms over the north-western mountains and the north China plains, covering the land with layers of loose sandy soil that over time have reached varying depths of hundreds of feet.

This loess soil, as George B. Cressey holds, retains the minerals of the surface growth it covers, is fertile and porous and although half-baked on the surface, is easily worked with simple tools, a fact that greatly facilitated primitive society's shift from hunting and food gathering to agriculture and food production, provided enough water was available for the purpose. Such an area was perfectly suitable for the beginning of Chinese civilization. Yet the very looseness of the soil created in the Yellow River system problems of water control that became a key factor in the development of the Chinese civilization. The muddy waters of the Huang Ho and its tributaries carry an extraordinarily high percentage of sediments, far higher than any other large river. This sediment is collected and carried along in

the rapidly flowing current of the upper course of the Yellow River. But when the river breaks through the mountain barriers of the north-west and levels off in the alluvial plain, slowing down its course, its sediments begin to settle, forming sandbanks and raising the riverbed, which then easily overflows into the adjacent land. To protect the land and confine the river to its course were, therefore, the major tasks of the early kings from the earliest times.

Yangshao Culture

Some 6,000 to 7,000 years ago, several clans and tribes—big and small—were scattered across China, leaving behind rich remains of culture. This stone-age culture(microlith) extended from the northeast through Inner Mongolia and Ninghsia to Xinjiang and Tibet in the southwest. These cultures are known in Chinese history as Yangshao culture on the middle reaches of the Huangho River and the Majiayao culture on its upper reaches. The name 'Yangshao' was derived from the name of a village situated in Mianchi County in the Honan Province in the central-east, and the name 'Majiayao' likewise came from a name of a place in the Lintao County in the Kansu Province on the border of Inner Mongolia.

Traces of Yangshao culture have been found in central Shansi, western Honan and southern Shansi—areas that probably comprised its cradle-ground; however, that culture spread as far as the upper and middle reaches of the Hanshui River in the south and the Hetao (Yellow River bend) zone in the north, the upper reaches of the Weiho River in the Kansu Province in the west and Shantung in the east. According to Bai Shouyi, the society was a pre-class society having features of the matriarchal communes.

The Yangshao people were engaged mainly in primitive agriculture buttressed, at least partially, by animal husbandry. The tools they used were pointed wooden sticks for the purpose of digging, and their stone implements, having finer touches, showed signs of technological development. They made use of stone axes, stone and bone spades and stone knives for preparing and tilling the soil. Grain was cultivated and along with it, plated vegetables. Bai Shouyi writes that grain was the main agricultural crop. Grain was placed on a millstone and ground with a hand-held stone pin or disc for husking.

Between 1973 and 1978, archaeologists unearthed large quantities

of carbonated rice remains and bone and wood spade-shaped implements used in rice planting at the site of Hemudu village in Yuyao County, Chekiang Province. These remains go backwards in time approximately 7000 years i.e, 5000 BC plus. It is definitely much earlier than rice cultivation in the Indus Valley which, according to Shireen Ratnagar's periodization, goes back roughly to the 2300 BC or the mid-Mature Harappan (Indus Valley) phase. What is interesting here is that a far more primitive culture known as the Yangshao culture could start producing grain much earlier than a far more advanced culture that the Indus Valley culture really was.

Besides primitive agriculture, hunting and fishing also played an important part in the economic life of the time. The main weapons included bows and arrows, stone-tipped spears, fishing lances, fish hooks and nets with stone-weights attached. The animal skeletons found at the Banpo site at Xian in Shansi point to the use of pigs and dogs.

Progress was made in the branches of weaving and sewing. Animal skins were also used for clothing, in all probability during the winter. Pottery has its own distinct identity. Painted pottery was the feature of both Yangshao and Majiayao cultures. One part of the pottery consisted of tools of production, while the majority, as expected, comprised utensils for everyday use: stoves, steamers, footed vessels, cauldrons, cups, plates, jars, pots etc. There are also many marks or symbols carved into the surface of the pottery which some scholars believe were a kind of primitive script.

According to Bai Shouyi, the Banpo site is a typical clan settlement. It covers an area of about 50,000 square metres and includes three sections, namely a residential quarter, a pottery-kiln quarter, and a common burial ground.

Lungshan Culture

The Longshan culture appeared some 1,500 years after the emergence of the Yangshao culture in the cradle area of the Chinese civilization. The Longshanoid tribes were distributed widely in that vast region. The zone comprised such areas such as Honan, Shantung, Hopei, the southern part of Shansi and the Weishui River basin in Shansi. It was greater in extent than the Yangshao culture.

In agriculture and animal husbandry, there was the progress of

production to an appreciable extent. The potter's wheel and the metallurgical manufacture of copper were achievements of a very high order. The introduction of new agricultural tools such as the wooden fork and the stone or clamshell sickle with handle attached to it enabled men to harvest ears of grain with the stems connected. This not only raised labour efficiency, but also made it possible to bring in fodder for the livestock. The number of reaping tools also increased.

Domesticated animals also showed signs of increase in both number and variety. Herds of pigs and dogs were raised everywhere, and others such cattle, goats, horses and chickens did not lag far behind. More than one-third of a total of 133 graves excavated at Dawenkou yielded pig bones which had been interred with corpses, the richest tomb in this respect yielding fourteen pig skulls. What is important is that the growth of pig raising provided a source of meat for man and made him less reliant on hunting.

By then, the raising of livestock had become a new means of livelihood. It played a significant role not only in the economic life but also in society. While participating in agricultural labour, the males also devoted themselves to animal husbandry and thus the acquisition of means of livelihood became a primarily male affair. The male asserted his control over production and means of production, while the female was kept confined to labouring within the household. In Engels' words, this signified 'the world-historic defeat of womanhood'. In fact, it was precisely these herds that became the major private property of the patriarchal family.

The advent of the metallurgical industry was an outstanding achievement of the patriarchal clan period. Copper tablets have been found at the Dacheng Mountain site near Tangshan in Hopei, while copper goods—knives, awls, chisels, daggers and rings have been dug out in different areas in Kansu.

An important symbol of patriarchal clan commune was the appearance in marriage relations of an enduring system of monogamy, with succession fixed through the paternal line. By then, the system of joint burial had been introduced. In the joint graves of Qijia culture at Qinweijia, the males are invariably on the right-hand side, stretched out with faces looking upward, while the females are always on the left, reclining on their sides facing the males, legs flexed. This burial

system appears to show that the males were, by then, in the dominant position and the females in a position of dependence and submission.

The patriarchal clan commune system represented a transitional social stage between primitive communal and slave society. Private ownership in one way or the other, social stratification, polarization between the rich and the poor and the possession of slaves all made their appearance in the patriarchal clan commune stage. In fact, the most important form of private property at that time was livestock herd. It was the fashion of tribes in various places to use pig palate bones as a yardstick for measuring wealth. The system was such that the private wealth that people accumulated while alive went into their graves as burial objects after their death. About one-third of 133 Dawenkou culture graves have pig skulls in them, the maximum number being fourteen. Such bones in varying numbers have been found in some other sites in Shantung. This, according to Bai Shouyi, shows that the pigs were owned individually by the grave occupant while alive and that the accumulation of personal property had already reached substantial proportions(Bai Shouyi, pp.49-50).

The class division in society is attested also by the evidence of the inequality in property in the Dawenkou burial grounds. The burials of the wealthy were extravagant and the pits were bigger—more than four metres long and three metres wide. The wealthy had fifty to sixty burial objects—the richest more than 160—including painted, jet black pottery, delicate production tools, ornaments, ivory combs, containers of different types and other objects. In contrast, of the 133 graves already excavated at Dawenkou, eighty employ only common production tools and household utensils as burial objects, and eight have no burial objects at all—meant for the lowly people. These clearly testify to the class stratification of the Chinese society.

Dawn of Chinese Culture in North China

There was a view prevalent in the Western world that Yangshan and Lungshan cultures were two parallel cultures of different origins. Kwang-Chih Chang has drawn our attention to the archaeological work in north China in the late 1980s and argued that such excavations have rendered obsolete this Western view. In his opinion, increased amounts of data, stratigraphical evidence and comparative studies of Neolithic assemblages of various types have jointly established

the fact that Neolithic pre-history in north China marks the development of a single-culture tradition and that this development underwent the following stages.

a) Incipient agriculture: A largely hypothetical cultural interval marking the transition of northern Chinese pre-historic cultures from food gathering to food production.
b) Establishment of the Yangshao culture, largely confined to northwestern Honan, central Shensi and southern Shansi—known as the North China Nuclear Area.
c) Expansion of the village farms into the lowlands of eastern and southern China: This stage is represented by a series of newly organized cultures—Miao-ti-kou II, Ta-wen-kou, Ch'ing-lien-kang, Chu-chia-ling and Feng-pi-t'ou—collectively known as the Lungshanoid cultures.
d) Formation of pre-historic local cultures: This is the stage of the classical Lungshan cultures, manifested in various local phases, in which emerged the cultures ancestral to the Shang and Chou civilizations.

Kwang-Chih Chang holds that absolute dating of any importance of these stages of culture is impossible, but the entire sequence must have been completed by about 1850 BC, when archaeological evidence of the proto-Shang culture becomes recognizable in the area. Thus the legacy of the developmental sequence can reasonably be placed at least several thousand years before the birth of Christ (Kwang-Chih Chang, 'Archaeology of Ancient China' in *Science* New Series, Vol.162, No.3853(November 1, 1968), pp.519-526).

CHAPTER : 2

A Note on the Sources

Introduction to Sources

Let us begin with some general remarks. Since China has one of the greatest, if not the greatest, historiographical traditions of the world, she is better provided with original sources than possibly any other country. There are dynastic histories (*cheng shih*) arranged on a uniform pattern comprising imperial records (*ti chi*) that dwell on successive emperors. These are followed by memoirs (*chih*) which consist of sections on the calendar (*li*) and rites and ceremonies. Music (*yo*) comes next; then jurisprudence(hsing); economics and commerce (*shih huo*); official state sacrifices (*chiao ssu*); astronomy (*thien wen*); five elements and inferences drawn from the activities of these (*wu hsing*); geographical notes (*ti li*); and literature (*iwen*).

The last section i.e, the literary source, is very important. It comprises, among other things, biographies of those among the literati who are regarded as eminent in the periods they lived. A tabulation of the Twenty-four official histories is given in A Wylie's *Notes on Chinese Literature*, (First edition, Shanghai 1867). The biographies begin with *Records of the Historians* or *Shih Chi* by Szuma (Ssuma) Chhien, the father of Chinese historiography. There are many other literary works also such as annals(*pien nien*). Then we have the *Bamboo Books* (*Chu Shu Chi Nien*) dealing with the 5th and 4th centuries BC. The other section comprises 'complete records' or *chi shi pen mo* which comes from another of the classics called the *Classic of History* or *Shu Ching* that deals with the Shang and early Chou phases. Thee are also 'separate histories' (*pieh shih*) and miscellaneous histories (*tsa shih*). Needham lamented that one of the greatest deficiencies of world scholarship was that practically none of the Chinese histories has been translated into European languages. A few decades have gone by since Needham wrote the above and there have at least been some developments in the way of

making translations of Chinese texts. We, however, are not entering into it at present.

There are heaps of literary works on the history of Science. Needham in his monumental work has done justice to them. We will refer to only one which might be called technological dictionaries or records of inventions and discoveries. The oldest of this group is called the *Book of Origins* or *Shih Pen*. It generally consists of recital of the names of legendary inventors, the entries being simply of the type of 'Po I tso ching; Po I invented well (digging); Hu Tshao tso I invented clothing; Li Shou tso shu invented computation etc. Most of the persons named are put down as ministers of Huang Ti, the entirely legendary Yellow Emperor who should not be confused with Shi Huangti, the founder of the First Feudal Empire in 221 BC. The book is valuable, according to Needham, not as throwing any light on the history of science as such, but for the systematization which it brings to the body of legendary technological lore.

Unlike other countries of the world, China can legitimately claim to have the longest historiographical tradition in the history of the world. However astounding it might appear to be, it is frequently possible to point out the year, month and day when a particular event took place. It is thus hardly surprising that there is a wide range of primary source-material spanning different periods of the history of the country. Modern archaeology has shown that the court diviners of the Shang kings maintained "archives" of their divinations, inscribed on bone and shell; here at the beginning, as Arthur F. Wright points out, was an association between magico-religious operations and record keeping that was to have long-term effects on the historiographical tradition. In fact, China's recorded history or the book of China enjoys an envious position of having a history of more than 3,600 years (See Foreword to Liu Guojun and Zheng Rusi, *The Story of Chinese Books* Beijing 1983).

Before the invention of paper, people of different countries throughout the world inscribed what they wanted to tell on a large variety of materials. The Europeans used stone, reeds, wax plates and parchment; the Babylonians used baked clay; the Indians specialized in *bhurya patra*; and the Chinese utilized tortoise shells, bones, bronze, stone, bamboo strips and wooden slats and silk.

In the remote past, as we all know, people did not have any written

language. During that "pre-historic period", people could speak and exchange views, but could not record their views. With the development of society, the need developed among the people to keep records of their experiences as also of others and to know about events in distant places. The only way at that time to keep records was to memorize them. Thus songs, ballads, folktales, proverbs, stories, idioms became part of memory. This was how the Vedas of the Aryans were memorized syllable by syllable by generations of priests until these were written down long time after in the 14th century AD in south India. Thus it was through memorization that records were imparted from one generation to another and from one area of the world to another. However, this method of keeping records in the mind cannot be reliable as many things fade from memory. With the passage of time names of places and folktales often changed and people forget about their original name or content. Because memories are fallible, people of China devised other means to assist recollections.

One of these was the method of tying knots. In fact, different knots—large or small, single or multiple, tied in various colours and placed high or low—indicated different things (See *The Story of Chinese Books*, p.3). This method was used by many ancient peoples, including the Chinese. *The Book of Changes* or *Yi Jing* is one of the classical Chinese works which contained a saying, "recording things by tying knots in olden times". The significance of such tying knots is, however, not known to us even today. Among the various minority nationalities of Chine, such as the Lisus and Hanis in Yunnan and the Gaoshans in Taiwan, tying knots as an aid for recollection was in vogue until recent years. When the Hani people bought or sold land, they put knots in a single strand of rope to indicate the value of the plots. Duplicate strands were given to both sides as evidence of the transaction. This method was used also by the Tartars, Persians, Mexicans and the Peruvians.

Another ancient method was cutting marks in wood. The distant ancestors of the Chinese people cut different signs on the wood to indicate different things. This is shown by the "notched wood strips" found in some of the oldest books. In the Museum of Yunnan Province there is a notched log once preserved by the Va people. On both sides of the log are an assortment of markings, the deep notches

indicating big events and shallow notches indicating small ones. Each year in the past new notches were added to the log. At harvest time every year, the villagers gathered for a meal and then one respected elder explained to them the significance of the different notches. Thus the people could recall the different events that had taken place in their village. Needless to state, occasions such as these helped preserve the collective memory of the Va people in an unbroken line.

Tying knots and putting notches were forerunners of books. These were also easy to carry and could be preserved for posterity. These in a way served the purpose of a language for those who knew about the secrets of the knots or the row of notches. These were memory aids, not language signs and did not constitute a written language. Written language, in all probability, evolved instead from drawing pictures.

Ancient people all over the world drew pictures of animal hunting and things closely connected with their productive labour or day-to-day existence on the rock walls of their cave dwellings. Typical examples of these are the Paleolithic drawings found in the caves of Zhoukoudian in China, Bhimbekta in India and in the caves of France and Spain. From such art works there emerged the concept of expressing ideas by pictures rather than by knots or notches. To start with, the pictures used as writing were the accurate representations of the subject. Over time—nobody knows how long it took—they became simplified and were reproduced with just a few strokes. Pictures were then stood as signs for words. This was the most primitive form of written script known as pictographs. The present-day Chinese written script evolved from such pictographs.

The forefathers of the Chinese people began to use them from the third millennium BC during the period of the Yangshao Culture(in modern Mianchi County, Honan) in the matriarchal clan society of 4115-2065 BC and the period of Longshan Culture(in modern Licheng County, Shantung) in the patriarchal clan commune society of 1725-1695 BC. In course of time, black and multi-coloured pottery with sign-scripts on it, some in single words and some in whole sentences, was discovered in archaeological excavations.

With the development of social production and class stratification within Chinese society, the state in an embryonic form appeared, and the members of the ruling classes felt the need to find out a

better way to keep records of state affairs. The earliest written records found in China till date are those of the Shang Dynasty, more than 3,500 years ago, a period when slavery as a mode of production is likely to have made its appearance. Let us now proceed to see how the Chinese developed their rich intellectual heritage and helped the posterity recreate the past. We begin with the inscriptions.

2. Inscriptions: a) Oracle Bone; b) Bronze and c) Stone

a) Oracle Bone Inscriptions

The earliest Chinese writing is the *chia ku wen* popularly known as the oracle-bone inscriptions. Historians place it to the second half of the Shang Dynasty (14th to 11th centuries BC). These inscriptions were discovered in course of excavations conducted along the River Huan, village Xiaotun, Anyang County in the province of Honan in 1899. Unidentified and a few in number, these were sold as fossil fragments to people who used them in brewing traditional medicine. Later on, these attracted the attention of scholars and years of study made them realize that these were primary source material for reconstructing the history of the Shang period. These were inscribed on tortoise shells or a piece of bull scapula for purposes of divination and thus came to be known as oracle bone inscriptions.

The oracle-bone inscriptions have been found all through the post-Liberation years—most of them during the Cultural Revolution. In 1971 and 1973, a total of 4,700 on animal bones and 60 on tortoise shells, all dating from about he 12th-11th centuries BC, were unearthed at Anyang, Honan Province, from the ruins of Yin(the place to which the Shang rulers moved their capital in the 14th century BC, after which this dynasty itself was also alternatively known as Yin). The inscriptions concern sacrifices, military expeditions, astronomy, hunting etc.

b) Bronze Inscriptions

The ancient Chinese also inscribed characters on bronze. They inscribed their names or symbols on tools and weapons to denote their ownership. This implies that private ownership must by then had emerged. The period could be roughly about 14th century BC, or the middle period of the Shang Dynasty. By then the slave system had been well established. Later on, bronze articles were inscribed

with writing to commemorate a special occasion or to explain particular reasons for making a specific bronze article. Later on, the names of the makers were marked; still later, the practice of preserving writings of great importance by inscribing them on bronzes came into use. With this, the number of characters also increased These inscribed writings, known as *ming wen*, give us much information about historical events, and were actually the first written records in Chinese history. During the Spring and Autumn Period (771-475 BC) and the Warring States Period (475-221 BC), each of the states– Chi, Chu, Ch'in etc—had its own style of writing on engraved stones.

The types of bronze articles covered a wide range and included such objects as a tripod, wine vessel, jug, tray/plate, jar, food vessel, bell, grain receptacle and wine vessel. The bronzes used by the rulers in feasting or as objects for offering sacrifices to the gods and ancestors were given the name *li chi* (ceremonial vessels) or *ji jin* (metals of blessing).

The San Shi tray (*pan*), Guo Ji Zi Bai tray, Mao Gong tripod (*ting*) and Hu tripod bear long inscriptions, and are important objects for research into the Western Chou Dyanasty (12/11th century BC-771 BC). For the Hu *ting* which was made in the middle period of the Western Chou Dynasty, records a transaction between two slave dealers who trade one horse and a bolt of silk for five slaves. Then in the Da Yu *ting* there is the record of a man who received land and grants of a chariot and horses, clothing and a horde of slaves. Some bronze vessels of the Western Chou period unearthed in 1966 at Chishan County near Sian, Shensi Province, bear inscriptions.

In the Palace Museum of Peking, the Museum of Chinese History, the Archaeological Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Nanking Museum there are large collections of bronze objects. The bronzes are valuable not only for their writings, but also for their casting, design and decorative patters, which provide us with priceless material for the study of arts and crafts in ancient China.

During the Cultural Revolution a large number of ancient relics have been discovered in Kansu Province, some of them being important finds of primitive culture. In September 1967, 340 bronze pieces, dating back to the early period of the Western Chou Dynasty, were brought to light at Pitsaopo, Lingtai County. Finely made they were intact and well preserved with cast inscriptions still clearly

visible. There was also a jade chisel carved in the image of a slave (Lan Hsin-wen, 'Finds from Kansu' in *New Archaeological Finds in China*, Peking, 1974, pp.31-34). In the same year, 17 bronze objects of the Ch'in (Chhin) Dynasty (221 BC-206 BC) were excavated at Shangyuanchia, Chinan County. Of these, a bronze weight is inscribed with the imperial mandates of the first and Second Emperors, reflecting the unification of China by Ch'in and the establishment of a centralized government. The other objects, while similar to those of the Warring States Period, have a style of their own, a style which developed later in Han Dynasty vessels.

The Hung Chin Chun (Red Turban Army) peasant uprising took place in the last years of the Yuan Dynasty(1271-1368 AD). In 1965, a bronze seal with the characters "Kuan Chun Wan Hu Fu" ("Command of Ten Thousand Troops") was unearthed in Kuanshan County, Honan Province. It was the seal of the peasant government under the Red Turban Army leader Hsu Shou-hui. Later, two bronze seals of Hsu Shou-hui's regime known as Tien Wan (1351-60) were found in the Changchung People's Commune, Yingshan County, Hupeh Province. One was round, baring the characters "Pien Liang Hsing Sheng Kuan Kou So" ("Officce in charge of Finance, Economy and Documents of Pienliang Province"), the other square, with characters "Chang An Tsang Yin" ("Seal of the Long Peace Granary"). In 1972, in Hsiangfan city, Hupeh Province, another bronze seal of the "Command of ten Thousand Troops" was found; it had been cast in the second year of the Lung Feng reign (1356) of the rebel peasant government under Han Lin-erh, the Red Turban leader at the end of the Yuan Dynasty. The insurgent army was the main force which destroyed the feudal rule of Yuan. These bronze seals from different places furnish vivid proof that the insurgent peasant army set up and exercised revolutionary power wherever it went (For more details, see "'Wenwu' (Cultural Relics) Magazine Reporter, 'A Preliminary Summary of Important Discoveries' in *New Archaeological Finds in China(II),* Peking 1978, pp. 4-6).

c) Stone Inscriptions

Unlike the Egyptians and the Red Indians, the Chinese inscribed writings on stone rather late. The earliest engraved stones that have been found in China are 10 stone drums of the Ch'in Dynasty. A

poem is carved all over the drums singing in praise of hunting. Although there is as yet no agreement about the exact year when the poem was carved on the stone drums, the general agreement on it is that these were commissioned by the Duke Wen of the Ch'in State during the reign of King Ping of the Chou Dynasty prior to the Warring States Period.

Inscriptions on stone must have made their appearance after the invention of written language. There is a statement in a book entitled *Mo Zi* of the Mohists which belonged to the early Warring States Period which has a definite bearing on the aspect we are dealing with. "Engrave on metal or stone" is a description about how to preserve written records. It can be said that since inscribed writings on bronzes can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn Period, inscriptions on stone are likely to have made their appearance then, although there is as yet no evidence of it. After the stone drums, we have the stone inscriptions of Ch'in Shi Huangti inscribed during the inspection tour of the country after unification.

During the Han rule (206 BC-220 AD), stone inscriptions became common. During the Eastern Han Dynasty, there were some put on rock cliffs and known as rock inscriptions reminiscent of those made by Asoka, the Maurya ruler of India of a fairly earlier period (early 3rd century BC). Others were put on rectangular and round monoliths for viewing in open fields. Known as tablets and steles, the writings on them commemorated military exploits, travels, construction projects as also biographies of noted individuals. The Ode to Xixia, Ode to Shimen, Tablet to Zhao Kuan and Tablet to Gengxun are steles produced during the Eastern Han Dynasty.

It was probably in the year 175 AD that the first whole text of a book was inscribed on stone for the public to read. Emperor Ling Ti of the Eastern Han was then seated on the throne. The books inscribed on stone in the famous calligraphy of Chai Young were as follows: *The Book of History*, *The Book of Songs*, *The Book of Changes*, *The Book of Rites*, *The Spring and Autumn Annals*, *Gong Yang's Commentary on "The Spring and Autumn Annals"* and *Analects of Confucius*.

By then, paper was invented in China; but it took a long way when it was used for book printing. Duplicate copies could be made by hand only. Books at that time consisted mainly of writings on

bamboo strips. Errors frequently occurred at the time of copying. Erection of stone tablets met a timely need. Errors at the time of copying could thus be avoided. Moreover, rubbing could be made from stone inscriptions. Rubbings replaced hand-copying and were faster to reproduce and, in a way, prepared the way for the invention of printing.

In the post-Han period, stone books continued to be made. During the Zhengshi reign (240-248 AD) of the Wei Kingdom, the *Book of History in Ancient Script* and a part of the Zuo Qiuming's *Commentary on "The Spring and Autumn Annals"* were inscribed on stone in an ancient script of the pre-Ch'in style, in "small seal characters" and in "official script". These texts became known as "the three style stone classics". Centuries later, during the Kaicheng reign (836-840 AD) of emperor Wen Zong of the Tang (Thang) Dynasty (618-907 AD) *kai shu* or regular style was used to inscribe the twelve Confucian classics—*The Book of Changes*, *The Book of History*, *The Book of Rites*, *The Book of Songs*, *Rites of the Chou Dynasty*, *Records of Rites*, *Zuo Shi's Comments on "The Spring and Autumn Annals"*, *Gong Yang's Commentary on "The Spring and Autumn Annals"*, *Gu Liang's Commentary on "The Spring and Autumn Annals"*, *The Canon of filian piety*, *Analects of Confucius and Literary Exposition*. Meanwhile with the invention of printing about this time, Confucian classics began to be printed by woodblocks copied from these stone classics. During the subsequent Northern Sung (960-1127 AD) and Southern Sung (1127-1279 AD) Dynasties and under the reign of Emperor Qian Long (1736-1795) of the Ching/ Manchu Dynasty, some other stone inscriptions containing classical writings were erected.

3. Writings on Bamboo Strips and Wooden Slats

In China, the oldest books were written on bamboo strips or wooden slats. Naturally, bamboo and wood were the earliest material used for making books. In fact, when speaking of a book or books, people of those bygone days used the words *dian ce*, *dian ji*, *jian bian* and *fan ce* indiscriminately. Books on bamboo strips were known by the ancient people as *jian ce*, while those on wooden slats were called *ban du* (*pan tu*). Books made of bamboo and wood predates the Warring States Period and, according to the Chinese historians,

probably existed during the Shang Dynasty. It has long been said that "it was the Shangs who began to use *dian* and *ce*", and the character *ce* has even been found on some of the Shang oracle bones, although no *jian ce* written by the ancient Chinese has survived (For details, see *The Story of Chinese Books*).

Over the last 100 years, in many parts of Kansu near Inner Mongolia, a large number of *jian du* belonging to the period between 2nd century BC and 4th century BC have been found. The majority contained official documents related to the country's border areas. One was an inventory showing the number of arms, instruments and other articles in use at far-off military post between 93 and 95 AD. It was formed of 77 wooden slats, which were somewhat broken, but the chords chords/strips made of wood still held them fast. Written records made of wooden slats and written in minority nationality languages have also been found in southern Xinjiang.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, ancient strips have been discovered at different places—in 1951 in an old tomb in Changsha and in 1953 at Lake Yangtian in Changsha. In 1957, again in an old tomb in Henan province, archaeologists discovered bamboo strips that date back to the Warring States Period. An old book—Yi Li written on bamboo strips have been found in an old tomb in Kansu in parts—seven sections out of a total seventeen—and dating back to the Eastern Han.

In the recent years, archaeologists have been able to find out more and more bamboo strips and earthen slats in ancient burials. The *Treaty of Alliance* unearthed in 1965, at the site of the capital of the State of Jin in Shansi Province, was written in vermilion on stone and jade splits. The text was a pact that the State of Jin entered into 2,400 years ago, during the Warring States Period. It gives us an idea of the documentary form of written records before national unification under the Ch'in, the data for studying the class struggle and social relations of that time as well as the form of written language before the time of Shi Huangti.

The bamboo strips and wooden slats also include the Confucian classics and works produced by exponents of various schools of thought in ancient times. The discoveries include works on military arts, medical works, laws and regulations, almanacs and writings on divination. Moreover, there are also a number of "registering strips",

or lists of burial objects. These lists are important as they have proved valuable in tracing the nomenclature of some old objects.

In 1972, in a Han Dynasty tomb at Wuwei, Kansu Province, were found 90 wooden slats with medical writings on them. Moreover, from Han Tomb No.2 at Mawangdui, Changsha, there was unearthed an almanac dating back to the Yuan-guang reign (129 BC) of the Han emperor Wu Ti. Incidentally, this is the earliest and the most complete almanac so far found in China.

In 1972, while excavating two early Western Han tombs in Yinchuehshan, Linyi County, Shantung Province, the Chinese archaeologists found altogether 4,900 bamboo strips. Among these were included *Sun Tzu Ping Fa (Master Sun's Art of War), Sun Pin Ping Fa (Sun Pin's Art of War), The Book of Weiliao Zi, Six Strategies, The Book of Guan Zi* and *The Book of Yan Zi.* Sun Tzu and sun were both famous strategists of ancient China; their biographies can be found in old histories. Of the two the former was the most important and it is his treatise that has received universal acclaim as the one of the greatest military treaties, if not the greatest, in the ancient world. Sun Tzu (Sun Wu) belonged to the Warring States Period; he lived in the State of Chi from where he fled to the State of Wu amid the vicissitudes of war. Sun Pin of the State of Chi of the Warring States Period, was a descendant of Sun Wu and chief of staff of Chi. The Western Han Dynasty historian Szuma Chien wrote in his well-known *Shi Chi* (*Historical Records*) that both Sun Wu and Sun Pin had written on the art of war. As Sun Wu was a guest minister to the Prince of Wu while Sun Pin was chief of staff of Chi, a clear distinction was made by the Eastern Han historian Pan Ku (32-92 AD). Master Sun Wu's *Art of War* has been widely known all along. But the work by Master Sun of Chi was not even mentioned by Tsao Tsao, the well-known strategist in the 2nd-3rd centuries in his annotations to Sun Wu, nor listed in the Chapter on Bibliography in the *History of the Sui Dynasty*. It appears that it may have been lost as early as the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 AD). Further, from the Sung Dynasty (960-1279 AD), onwards, some people thought that Master Sun's *Art of War* was not written by Sun Wu; others have doubted even the existence of Sun Wu. However, the majority of scholars believed that pre-Ch'in writings were often the work of more than one person, and that Master Sun's *Art of War* which sums up

the experience of the long wars during one of the most tumultuous periods of ancient Chinese history, had possibly been first written by Sun Wu, then completed by Sun Pin. As no copy of Sun Pin's *Art of War* had survived, the controversy remained unresolved until the discovery of both treatises. This proves that Szuma Chien was right, i.e, each of the two authors had written his own treatise on war. It also confirms Pan Ku's distinction between Master Sun of Wu and Master Sun of Chi (See Hsin Wen, 'Ancient military Treatises on Bamboo Strips found in Han Tombs' in *New Archaeological Finds in China II*, Peking 1978, pp.72-78).

Among these remains were many classics from before the Ch'in Dynasty, but no Confucian works. Since the bamboo strips were placed in the tombs shortly after Shi Huangti had "burned the books"(mainly Confucian books), the finds illustrate his strict selection on political grounds.

The finds in Han Tomb No.1 included, among other things, bamboo strip books entitled *Six Tactics, Works of Mo Zu, Spring and Autumn Annals of Yen Tzu, Works of Kuan Tzu*, and *Works of Wei Lao Tzu*. Besides these, there are 4,942 bamboo strips inscribed with long-lost books whose very names have been forgotten, for example, *Principles of Yin and Yang by Master Tsao.*

Then from Han Tomb No.2 appeared 32 bamboo strips of the *Calendar of the First Year of the Yuan Kuang Period of the Han Dynasty Emperor Wu Ti's Reign*. Its date is 134 BC, which is the earliest and the most complete calendar found so far (*New Archaeological finds in China* (*II*), p.77).

There is no doubt that the discovery of the large group of bamboo strips, particularly the Long-lost Sun Pin's Art of War, is important for research in the history of the struggle between the Confucian and the Legalists before the Ch'in Dynasty and the military ideas of the time. It is, as some Chinese scholars argue, also valuable for the study of paleography, the evolution of *li shu* script and calligraphic art.

The length of the bamboo strips was varied, the longest being two feet four inches and the shortest eight inches. Classics were written on the strips during the Han Dynasty, *The Canon of Filial Piety* on shorter strips, and biographies and essays on the shortest. The laws of the state and history books compiled under the auspices

of the government were also written on the longest strips to signify their importance.

The use of wooden slats was limited to certain specific purposes—for official documents, registers, notices and correspondence, as also for drawing pictures. Wooden slats were also used to write short articles and to make inventories of things. According to the ancient book *Yi Li*, "Characters numbering more than a hundred are written on bamboo strips; those below a hundred are written on wooden slats. This indicates the specific purposes of the two.

4. Writings on Silk and Books made of Scrolls and Rods: a) Writings on Silk Fabrics; b) Invention of Paper; c) The Scroll and Rod System: Works during the Period of Scrolls and Rods; d) From Scrolls to Leaves

a) Writings on Silk Fabrics

The Warring States Period witnessed two important developments in writing and the production of books. One was the birth of unofficial writers, made possible due to the disintegration of system of emperors employing official historians. The other was the appearance of writings on silk that eventually led to the invention of paper and the enrichment of historical sources.

Writings on bamboo strips and wooden slats were followed and accompanied by writings on silk fabrics during the intervening period between the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period. Silk fabrics were called *bo* or *jian* and thus a book made of silk fabrics was called a *bo shu* or *jian* shu. Mo Zi, the Mohist philosopher of the 4th century BC, is quoted as saying: "Write on bamboo or silk, engrave on metal or stone". This shows that in Mo Zi's time, silk had already been in use as a material for book writing.

Appearing probably at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, silk scroll books became fairly well-known in the early Warring States Period and continued to be used through the Ch'in and Han periods. In a catalogue of the national library in the *History of the Han Dynasty*, a fascicle or a chapter was called either *bian* or *juan*, or both. *Bian* was used for a bundle or bundles of bamboo strips and *juan* for a silk scroll or scrolls. This means that during the Western Han Dynasty, books made of bamboo strips and wooden slats existed side by side with books made of silk fabrics. Although paper had been invented

by the time of the Eastern Han Dynasty, it was still not used much in book making (See *The Story of Chinese Books*, p.42-43).

Although remains of silk scrolls were dug out from a tomb near Changsha, Hunan Province before 1949 and again in 1951, most of the silk had rotted underground over the centuries leaving only shreds. Complete silk books were unearthed in 1973-74 at Mawangtui in Changsha. It dates back to the 12th year (168 BC) of the Qianyuan reign of Emperor Wen Ti of the Han Dynasty. Among the tombs found were two lost editions of *The Book of Lao Zi* named respectively Edition A and Edition B.

The *Chan Kuo Tse* or The Records of the Warring States is a book of history recording the arguments and tactics of retainers to the rulers of the different princely states. The newly-found copy on silk has 27 chapters with 11,000 words, 60 percent of which do not appear in the extant edition. It throws new light on the tactics of the States of Chi, Yen, Chao, Wei and Han in uniting against the State of Ch'in as also on the suspicions, jealousies, intrigues and counter-intrigues within these alliances. Some chapters differ in many places from the extant versions. As for example, in the latter, whole paragraphs are omitted, notes are written in a way that they are mistaken for texts, sentences in certain chapters are in fact thrust in from others. The unearthed book also helps explain some discrepancies between the extant edition of the *Chan Kuo Tse* and *ShihChih* (*Historical Records*)—China's first known general history written by Szuma Chien in the Western Han dynasty. This newly discovered copy on silk is a valuable supplement to the history of the Warring States Period as well as a great help to textual editing.

Among the long-lost books on natural science, there is one dealing with the motion of the five planets, a work on astronomy developed upon the older *Hsing Ching* (Star Manual) written by Kan Teh and Shih Shen of the Warring States Period. The *Hsiang Ma Ching* (Studies of Horses) specially deals with the appearance of horses; this book of 5,200 words is recovered intact and a rare source for the study of ancient animal husbandry. There are also medical items which include a partial text on pathology with a big coloured chart showing men and women undergoing physical exercises. There is also a book of 10,000 words containing mainly complete prescriptions.

Among the burials were also found three ancient tri-coloured silk maps, depicting mountains, rivers, cities, towns and even streets. Of the three, the most remarkable is a military map that highlights the deployment of armed forces and commanding fortifications. The defence areas are vividly delineated. The map is finely executed and produced with great accuracy and points to ancient achievements in cartography and the scientific level of geographical surveys in China during those bygone days. These maps show that in China in the second and third centuries BC, geography was given importance and the natural and military sciences had been developing at the time of rising feudalism.

Silk, no doubt, was quite expensive. It was impossible for common people to use it for writing. Thus another substance was needed in its place that would retain the advantage associated with silk, but would at the same time be cheaper. The ground was thus prepared for the advent of paper.

b) The Invention of Paper

China is the country which had invented paper-making. But what is still not known is the year of its origin. The man who is generally known to have invented paper invented was Cai Lun who, according to Fan Ye (*History of the Later Han Dynasty*), did it in 105 AD. He did it with tree bark, hemp, rags and old fishing nets. Historical records, however, show that paper had already come into use in China long before 105 AD. Xu Sheng, a contemporary of Cai Lun, described the process of paper manufacture in his dictionary—the earliest in China—called *Analytical Dictionary of Characters* and completed about 100 AD. The material used was silk waste. There are other evidences also which could trace the origin further backwards to 12 BC and more. At the site of an ancient fortress in Lop Nur, Xinjiang, a piece of paper of paper was found that was made of hemp. That paper was of a primitive type as judged by its poor quality. Among some of the other things found with this paper were some wooden slats that dated back to the first year (49 BC) of the Huang Long reign of the Western Han emperor Chuan Ti. Excavation work since then led to the discovery of an old tomb at Wuwei at Kansu in 1974. Since this paper dated back to the time of the Eastern Han Dynasty, the beginning took place at an earlier period.

However, Cai Lun's contribution at least lies in the fact that his use of tree bark, hemp ends etc. was a great technical improvement over the use of silk waste, making mass production of paper possible.

B. Karlgren in his *Philology and Ancient China* (Oslow 1926, pp.44-45) holds that the invention of paper was a great misfortune for China. Although the Chinese were ahead of the west in printing also, this did not begin till 8th or 9th century AD, leaving a gap of 700 years during which all manuscripts were written on perishable material instead of on the clumsy but durable parchment of the West. In Europe, on the other hand, the art of mass-production was obtained soon after the appearance of the fragile non-durable material.

c) The Scroll and Rod System: Works during the Period of Scrolls and Rods

Although paper first appeared in China, it was used for purposes other than writing for a considerable period of time. The gradual substitution of paper for bamboo, wood and silk took place only in 404 AD when Huan Xuan issued an order banning the use of bamboo strips and wooden slats. The archaeological finds have made it clear that the earliest paper books were in the form of scrolls. Part of the work entitled *History of the Three Kingdoms* unearthed in 1924 in Shanshan County, Xinjiang, dates back to the Jin Dynasty. Another part was found in 1965 at the site of a Buddhist pagoda in Turpan, Xinjiang. Written in the official *li* script, the text dates back to the 4th century. Among other scrolls belonging to the 5th as also 7th, 8th and 9th centuries. Particularly remarkable are the first fiver chapters of *Analects of Confucius with Annotation by Zheng Xuan* dating back to the Tang (Thhang) Dynasty. It was a copy made by a very young one. Incomplete, at the end of one chapter is the clear signature of a young copyist: "Bo Tian-shou, a pupil, on February 1, in the 4th year of the Jinglong reign" Interestingly, the inscription includes his age, 12, his birthplace and a few lines of his random thoughts.

A large number of paper scrolls covering the period from the 5th to the 9th centuries, have been discovered in good condition in the Thousand-Buddha Caves at Dunhuang, Kansu. It is clear from these finds that the form of the earliest paper books followed that of silk scrolls. Sheets of paper were pasted together and rolled sidewise

around a rod to form the scroll. This was known as the Scroll and rod system.

Books in scroll form were in use from the second to the tenth centuries, and they were all copied by hand. As paper became readily available, the number of copyists increased. The writers of the Eastern Han Dynasty and after flourished in the branch of History. Their books included the *History of the Three Kingdoms* by Chen Shou and the *History of the Later Han Dynasty* by Fan Ye, both well-known works of dynastic history, presented as a series of biographies.

d) Works during the Period of Scrolls and Rods

A number of other books on the biographical style were written. The History of the Wei Dynasty by Wei Shou of Northern Chi (550-557), History of the Sung Dynasty by Shen Yue of Liang (502-557) and History of the Southern Chi Dynasty by Xiao Zixian are cases in point. The Thang emperor Tai Zong set up a bureau of history that led to the compilation of a number of texts such as the *History of the Jin Dynasty, History of the Northern Chi Dynasty, History of the Northern Chou Dynasty, History of the Liang Dynasty, History of the Chen Dynasty* and the *History of the Northern Dynasties*. There were also some books that were pioneering studies in historiography.

The period also saw the development of literary criticism. Texts such as *Historical Allusions and Essays* by Cao Pi, *On Poetry Writing* by Lu Ji of Western Jin, *Carving a Dragon at the Core of Literature* by Liu Xie of the Liang Dynasaty and *Critique of Poetry* by Zhong Rong were important in this field and represented a new field of interest.

In the same period there appeared reference books. The earliest work in this field is *Imperial Encyclopedia* that was compiled under the orders of Cai Pi, emperor Wen Ti of the Wei Dynasty. Others included *Xiuwen Hall Imperial Encyclopedia, Selections of Miscellaneous Writings* etc. During the Thang dynasty, reference books compiled by individuals became more common. These reference books throw light on the history of pre-Thang dynasties. Some of which are *Literary Records Collected and Classified, Book Records of the Northern Hall, Prijmary Anthology and Six Cards.*

Buddhist scriptures were translated into Chinese from the late Eastern Han Dynasty. A number of studies of Buddhist scriptures

were written also. Catalogues recording Buddhist works were first written in the Wei and Jin Dynasties. The Kaiyuan Catalogue of Buddhist Works served as the foundation for the collection of Buddhist scriptures, Tripitaka in Chinese that totalled 5040 fascicles. Later, some additions and reductions were also made. Then by the late Eastern Han Dynasty, copies of Taoist classics also made their appearance. The *Taoist Patrology* was compiled during the reign of emperor Xuan Zong of the Thang Dynasty.

Many well-known works of Philosophy were produced during this period. The thoughts of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi travelled far and wide during the Wei and Jin Dynasties. Books such as *Annotations to "The Book of Lao Zi"* and *Annotations to "The Book of Zhuang Zi"* exerted great influence. Works championing materialist ideas refuting religious and superstitious ideas was put forward in On the *Non-existence of Ghosts* and *On the Destructibility of the Soul* belonging to the Jin and Liang Dynasties respectively.

The dominant school of thought at that time was, no doubt, Confucianism, as taught in the national academics. New ideas were found to explain Confucian thoughts by adjusting them to the new situation, so as to avoid being repetitive of those propagated during the Han rule. One can refer to such works as *Commentary on "The Book of Changes"* and *Brief Exposition of "The Book of Changes"* by Wang Bi. Texts with new explanations and ideas were prepared under the Thang Dynasty viz, Annotations to the Five Classics by Kong Yangda and commentaries on The Book of Rites and Rites of the Chou Dynasty by Jia Gongyan.

An accidental discovery by a Taoist priest named Wang in the Thousand-Buddha Caves at Dunjuang, Kansu Province, in 1899, unearthed a large number of scrolls belonging to the period between the 5th and 10th centuries. Wang was tricked into giving the largest portion of them to an Englishman, Aurel Stein, and a Frenchman, Paul Pelliot. They took them to Britain and France. Later, some other bureaucrat-scholars got away with many more of these ancient treasures. The remainder, about 8,000 scrolls, was sent to Peking Library.

Among the finds dug out were some of the first printed books, paintings, woodcuts, brocades, embroideries and of course, hand-copied scrolls that formed the greatest part of the treasure. Among

the hand-copied scrolls were Buddhist scriptures, Taoist scriptures, Confucian classics, books on philology and geography, medical books, novels, popular ballads and books of divination. Added to these were poems, ballads, short essays, letters, account records, calendars, census records, contracts, official documents and oracles. Languages used were varied—Han, Tangut, Tibetan, Sanskrit and various Central Asian languages, such as Khotanese, Sogdian, Khotanese, Uygur and Kuchean. These findings also throw light on the history of Chinese literature.

e) From Scrolls to Leaves

The scroll forms were replaced by books in leaf form. During the Warring States Period and the Ch'in and Han Dynasties, lengthy scrolls were few and thus caused no problems. However, from the Sui and Thang Dynasties onwards, after a number of dictionaries had been published, the matter of looking up a word or sentence was a regular necessity. In such a situation, it was very inconvenient to roll and unroll a scroll due to its enormous volume. At that time, someone, we do not know who, solved the problem by folding the paper to form a pile in a rectangular shape. The front and back covers of such a book were made of strong, thick paper, sometimes mounted on cloth for protection. This was a form that was called a "leaf binding", or "sutra binding". Undoubtedly, this was a great step forward in the development of books.

5. Block Printing

The art of printing, both by woodblocks and movable type, was invented by the Chinese. Although opinions varied till recently, the general agreement now is that the art was invented during the Thang Dynasty (618-907). The oldest printed materials are the *Diamond Sutra* (868 AD) and the calendars of 877 and 882. These were among the thousands of manuscripts found in Dunhuang and carried away to London by Aurel Stein. This Sutra is a scroll 14 Chinese feet long and deals with Buddhist scriptures.

6. Paintings

Mural paintings lying in abundance in the tombs spread over many parts of the country comprise an important source for getting insights into the different facets of life in days long gone by. In the Gobi

desert some kilometres northwest of the city of Chiaukuan in Kansu, lie hundreds, if not thousands, of ancient tombs. In 1972-73, eight were excavated. Studies of their structure, the costumes of the people portrayed and the burial objects enable people to conclude that they date from the Wei (220-265) and the Western Tsin (265-316) phases.

In six of the eight tombs, there are over 600 well-preserved wall paintings on brick that depict various facets of life at that time viz, political, economic and cultural aspects and the relations between classes and nationalities. There are scenes of farming, mulberry-leaf picking, herding, fetching water from wells, and hunting. Along with it there are pictures of forests, military colonies and camps, kitchens, feasts, musicians, chess-players, cattle and horses, processions, fortified houses, clothing, silk and household utensils.

These paintings mainly reflect the power and pomp of the occupants of the tombs. The middle or lower-ranking officials seem to be projected in the "Procession" pictures and they appear to have lived a decadent life. These features are more glaring in the brick paintings in tombs 6 and (For details, see Chang Ming-chuan, 'Mural Paintings in the Wei and Tsin Tombs at Chiayukuan' in *New Archaeological Finds in China (II)*, Peking 1978, pp.85-93).

Over 200 brick-paintings depict working people in farming, mulberry-growing and animal husbandry, showing the whole production of farm production from sowing to winnowing. Ploughing was done with two oxen or one ox and an improved ploughshare. In fact, portrayals of the harrow and smoothing float are the earliest of these farm tools found so far. From these murals one gets the graphic data for the study of China's ancient agriculture.

From the pictures of silkworm cocoons, fine silk and hanks of silk yarn, one knows that the women under the trees were picking mulberry leaves. Among them are short-haired women of a minority nationality, all barefoot, indicating that they could not afford shoes. Their wretched life was in sharp contrast to that of the ladies from aristocratic families who did neither pick mulberry trees nor do any other manual work except wearing fine silk and living in luxury on the working people's labour.

It is interesting to point out that in some paintings, working women—whether sowing, harvesting or picking up mulberry leaves—are presented as simple but strong in character. By contrast,

the petty officials holding writing tablets or swords are shown as flunkeys of their masters who are often depicted as fierce and cruel. It is obvious that these paintings were done by members of the oppressed sections of society, expressing through their artistic creations, their love and hatred. Artistic creations of this type only belie the elitist concept of "art for art's sake" and drive home the fact that works of art also has a class character.

This was a period of the transition to the feudal society and not much work of this type has been known. It is thus quite natural that these Wei and Tsin murals on brick are very valuable for study. As these paintings form groups and the tombs are of different periods, they provide material highlighting the process of change in Wei-Tsin painting and for tracing the relation between the Kansu cave art of the Northern Dynasties (386-581) and the earlier traditional painting. Thus an important link between Han Dynasty painting and the Buddhist murals of the Northern Dynasties have been identified. That this is an important discovery for the history of Chinese painting goes beyond doubt.

In the early days of the Thang Dynasty (618-907) the expanding feudal economy and the relative stability of social life caused the fine arts to flourish and this is attested by remarkable development in the field of mural painting. Excavation work conducted in 1971-72 led to the discovery of the tombs of two Thang princes (Chang Huai and Yi Teh) in Changan and Loyang—the two capitals of the Thang rulers. These were built in 706 AD as attendant tombs to the Chienling Mausoleum of the emperor and empress at Chienhsien County, Shensi. The themes dealt with in the murals spread over 800 sq.m. are varied: court ladies/beauties; chariots, carriages and horses; terraces, battlements and parapets; flags, banners; hills, rivers, trees and rocks; birds, flowers; halberds, spears, knives and swords; exotic animals and insects. While painting, the painters used fine brushes with colour. They depicted the exploiting class life of the Thang nobles, the contacts between different nationalities and the court manners of the time. Needless to say, these are first-hand material for getting insights into the feudal society of Thang.

After the establishment of the Thang Dynasty, the interior of China was unified, relations were forged with many countries and regions, thereby promoting trade and cultural exchange. Foreign envoys came

to the Thang capital Chagnam and often took part in weddings, funerals or sacrificial ceremonies of the Thang court. Foreigners' participation in such ceremonies is reflected in at least two paintings. Ancient books also mention paintings recording such friendly exchanges, some of which are still extant.

Many paintings depict the life of palace attendants. The nearly 300 palace attendants were controlled by six bureaus and tightly organized, with a detailed division of labour. They were there just to serve the emperor, empress and imperial concubines in dressing, eating, housing accommodation and travelling. Many paintings unearthed from the tombs testify to the pomp and debauchery of the Thang ruling members. The saying was, "Each carriage costs hundreds of thousands of coins, each dish as much as the whole property of 10 ordinary families" (Chin Wen's article 'Two Underground Galleries of Tang Dynasty Murals' in *New Archaeological Finds*...(*II*), ibid).

It goes without saying that it took hundreds or thousands of painters to create the artistic blossoming of the Thang period. However, how miserable the conditions were for those who created it. From the remnants of paint dishes and crude utensils found in the tomb of Crown Prince Yi Teh, one can visualize how inhumanly the painters were treated. Chin Wen writes in his article that when the well-known painter Yen Li-pen was ordered to paint a picture by the Thang emperor Tai Tsung, he had to crawl on the ground before the emperor and other high officials while he worked, bathed in sweat. There were even instances of Thang painters being killed after an artistic achievement. The Sung Dynasty (960-1279) writer Shen Kua recorded that Wang Hung, governor of the capital, gathered the best painters that he could find to decorate the walls with murals in the Shengshou Temple (temple for Commemorating the Emperor's Birthday). After they had finished their work, Wang Hung had all 18 of them killed and buried in a common pit, so that none else could acquire better murals than those under his patronage.

Wall paintings have also been dug out from a brick tomb of the Liao Dynasty (916-1125) at Chienwulipukeh Village, Kulum Banner, Cherim League, Kirin Province. The murals in colour that have survived cover a space of 180 sq.m. Noteworthy, among other things, are wall paintings of processions of Khitan nobles starting on a tour

and returning from it. This return tour is a rare find. The paintings, besides showing the pomp and power of the tomb's occupant, also depict how under the rule of the Khitan nobility, the Khitan herdsmen suffered oppression and enslavement just as the other toilers did sharing with them the same historical fate.

7. Miscellaneous

There are heaps of literary works on the history of Science. Needham in his monumental work has done justice to them. We will refer to only one which might be called technological dictionaries or records of inventions and discoveries. The oldest of this group is called the *Book of Origins* or *Shih Pen*. It generally consists of recital of the names of legendary inventors, the entries being simply of the type of 'Po I tso ching; Po I invented well (digging); Hu Tshao tso I invented clothing; Li Shou tso shu invented computation etc. Most of the persons named are put down as ministers of Huang Ti, the entirely legendary Yellow Emperor who should not be confused with Shi Huangti, the founder of the First Feudal Empire in 221 BC. The book is valuable, according to Needham, not as throwing any light on the history of science as such, but for the systematization which it brings to the body of legendary technological lore.

CHAPTER : 3

China At A glance

China admittedly is one of the largest countries of the world, her territory being about the size of the whole of Europe with a total area of 9,600,000 square kilometres. She is located on the western shores of the Pacific Ocean. With a continental boundary of more than 20,000 kilometres, China adjoins Korea in the east, the People's Republic of Mongolia in the north, the USSR in the northeast and the northwest, Afganistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan in the west and southwest, and Burma, Laos and Vietnam in the south. The continental coastline is about 18,000 kilometres long, and looks across the seas towards Japan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei. China comprises twenty-two provinces and five autonomous regions.

She is the home of 56 nationalities. Over nine-tenths of her people belong to the Han nationality. There are, besides the Han, 55 other minority nationalities such as the Mongol, Hui, Tibetan, Uighur, Miao, Yi, Chuang, Chungchia, Korean, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Tazikh, Tatar, Uzbek, Tungshiang, Salar, Pao An and other nationalities. And the real actors in the drama of Chinese history had neither been the great emperors nor the great generals, but rather the nameless food-gatherers—the peasants who set forth and carved out for themselves homes and tiny plots of beans or rice far from the places where they were born, as also part-time peasants and part-time artisans who invented tools to work on in the field and their small homes to meet daily needs. This civilization is one of the oldest in the history of the world and fit to be compared with the contemporary civilizations in Sumer, Babylon, Egypt or the Indus Valley. Broadly speaking, traditional Chinese society was divided into two sections—the peasants, artisans and other toiling people on the one hand, and the emperor, landlords, scholars, merchants and officials, on the other. It was the Chinese people who, through their sweat, skill, creativity

and tears created the wealth of the country and helped in the building up of the Chinese civilization.

The basis of the Chinese society was the family. In fact, it was the state in miniature. The main function of the family was to raise filial sons. Within the family, the father was all-powerful. He was the supreme autocrat, enjoying absolute control over the use of all family property and income and a decisive voice in arranging the marriages of the children. According to the law of the land, he had the right to sell out his children into slavery and even to kill them. Whether in slave society or in the feudal society, the domination of patriarchy was all pervasive in the Chinese family. What is thus evident is the domination of age over youth.

This domination of age over youth was perfectly matched by the domination of men over women. In the family, a girl did not have any rights whatsoever. They were universally illiterate. They had no rights over family property. They had no say in their own marriages. The status within the family was codified in the "three bonds" emphasized by the Confucian philosophers, namely, the bond of loyalty on the part of the subject to the ruler, of filial obedience on the part of the son to the father and the bond of chastity on the part of the wives but never of the husbands. What is most interesting about this doctrine is that two of these three relationships were clearly within the family and all were between the superior and the subordinate.

The peasants who economically stood at the bottom of the Chinese society, were basically in a state of dependence, whether they rented their farms or owned them. J. Chesneaux observes that the peasants who worked their own land were probably in the majority, but they were not much better off than the tents. They were under the firm grip of the landowners who acted as moneylenders. Peasants, whether they were tenants or farm owners, had to reckon with the landowners' influence with tax collectors, courts and the police. There is no doubt that it was a feudal situation as the mass of the peasantry were under the domination of a minority of landowners. Joseph Needham has suggested the term 'bureaucratic feudalism' to emphasize the unique combination of economic and political power.

Besides the peasants, the artisans formed another important group in the social hierarchy. The town-dwelling artisans were organized into guilds which controlled production and marketing in each

professional sector such as weaving, shoe-making, bamboo-handicrafts, gold-working and so one. Besides these, there were part-time rural manufacturers who also acted as peasants in some part of the year. Thus there was, as in contemporary India, a blending of agriculture and handicrafts in rural China. There was another large section in rural society made up of day-labourers, vagabonds, boatmen, peddlers and porters. The peasants, artisans and other working people formed the oppressed classes in Chinese society.

It is interesting to point out that the Chinese did not produce a bourgeoisie as a new class of entrepreneurial city-dwellers. This was because in feudal China, the bourgeoisie as a powerful social class did not have any scope for development. J.K.Fairbank says that instead of a bourgeoisie, China created a new class of a very different type. This was known as the gentry class which formed the ruling class in China. They were generally known as the 'scholar-gentry' or scholar-officials'. The Chinese gentry should be distinguished from the English gentry of the late-feudal period. Unlike the English gentry who emerged out of the dissolution of the monasteries and had capitalistic tendencies, the Chinese gentry was basically feudal in character. Fairbank holds that they could be understood only in a dual political and economic sense, as connected with both landholding and office-holding. It was this class which constituted the real ruling class in China. They possessed power, knowledge and land.

Generally speaking, individuals fit to be called members of the gentry class (*shen-shi*) had to fulfil some basic requirement, i.e, they would have to pass Confucian tests. They enjoyed a position of utmost importance in the Chinese society and were the most privileged class. Only they had the right to join governmental work held in the Confucian temples and perform the ancient rites of clans. The dress they wore was different from those of the ordinary people. There were many people who were richer than the gentry. Still they did not have the right to enjoy the power and privilege of *shen-shi*. After the passing tests at the district level, they came to be called *sheng-yuan* and after passing the higher provincial and metropolitan tests, as *chu-jen* and *shin-she* respectively. The gentry belonging to the first group wore hats with silver buttons attached on them, while those of the second and third group who were higher than the first wore hats with gold buttons stuck on them. After gaining more governmental

posts, more precious buttons made of metal adorned their hats.

The gentry enjoyed so great a position in the society that no one could humiliate them, nor could the government officials interfere in their work. Whenever a person below the rank of the gentry did any wrong to a member of the gentry, then the punishment he received was always far more than the penalty received by members of the gentry on similar occasions. No person could call a *shen-shi* as a witness in the court of law. A *shen-shi* always enjoyed the privilege of not making any personal appearance in the court. He could, instead, send one of his servants to the court in his place. In case a *shen-shi* was accused of committing a crime, the magistrate was not legally in a position to try him. He would have to consult a higher official—the education commissioner—in that matter. It was only after the dismissal of a *shen-shi* by a higher official that the magistrate could try him in the court of law and mete out punishment against him.

The members of the gentry quite naturally did not have to any manual labour as they felt their cultural level was too high to do such low and detestable work. They only did mental labour. They need not have to pay poll tax(tax per person). They were made free from the burdens of such mundane things on earth and could thus devote their whole attention to study and occupy top government posts by passing Confucian tests. In 1227 AD when land tax was merged with poll tax, the gentry paid a tax whose amount was almost half than others.

At the local level, the gentry had the power to mediate in disputes. They regarded themselves as the guardians of China's ancient cultural heritage. They propagated Confucian morality and extended financial assistance to the creation of a number of private educational institutions. Whenever people from below burst out in anger and took to the path of rebellion, the gentry led armed mercenaries to crush them mercilessly. They also maintained a liaison between the government and the people. For these various reasons, the gentry constituted the most important class in Chinese society. Immanuel Hsu has described the Chinese state as a 'gentry state'.

In practice, individual members of the gentry did not hold all three of these resources or in equal quantities. There were some educated people who failed in the Confucian examinations and others who refused to sit for it. Side by side, only a limited fraction of the

gentry directly assumed political and administrative duties. As for ownership of land, it was no doubt the main source of economic power in ancient China. It was generally possessed by people holding Confucian degrees and occupying public office, although there were landowners with no degrees as also impoverished scholars. However, the interesting point is that membership in the gentry offered many chances to grow rich. In reality, the gentry constituted the big landowners, the economic base of the ruling class.

The members of the gentry enjoyed certain legal privileges. They were entitled to special treatment in the courts, and if they were found guilty of a crime their punishment would always be lighter than the statutory penalty.

The gentry families lived mainly in the walled towns, not in villages. The towns were 'walled' because, as Chesneaux observes quite rightly, of the constant threat of peasant revolts. The gentry formed a stratum of families based on landed property which stood in the mid-way between the peasant masses on the one hand, and the officials and merchants who were in charge of overall administration and commercial activity, on the other.

That brings us to the merchants. Although manufacturing and trade were lively and profitable, the merchants were given the lowest position in the social hierarchy. Chesneaux observes that the inferior status assigned to them represented the defensive reaction of an agricultural society against economic forces that were threatening its equilibrium. However, the Chinese society accommodated its wealthy merchants by the backdoor, through the special quotas that enabled them to buy Confucian degrees. In this way they could bring their social status into harmony with their economic power.

That brings us to the political situation of China. From the ancient times, China was ruled by a number of dynasties such as *Hsia* (2200-1700 BC approx), *Shang* (18th century BC to 12th century BC), *Western Chou* (1123 BC or 1066 BC to 771 BC), *Eastern Chou* (771-265 BC), *Ch'in/Chhin* (221 BC-206 BC), *Han* (206 BC-220 AD), *Three Kingdoms* (220-265 AD), *Chin* (265-420), *Six Dynasties*(420-598 AD), *Sui* (581-618 AD), *T'ang*/Thang (618-907AD), *Five Dynasties* (907-960 AD), *Sung* (960-1279 AD), *Yuan* (1271-1368 AD), *Ming* (1368-1544 AD) and then the *Manchu* or the Ch'ing (1644-1911 AD). Throughout this long history, China was

ruled by a foreign only twice—one was by the Mongols who established the Yuan dynasty, and the other was the Manchu dynasty—the second and the last foreign dynasty.

However, the study of the *Bamboo Books* discovered in 279 AD has enabled scholars to take the beginning of dynastic rule some centuries backwards in time to the early 3rd millennium BC, although we need more information to establish whether those dynasties were historical or not. These are Furshi(2852 BC approx), Shenrnnurng(2737 BC approx), Huarngdih(2697 BC approx), Shauhhauh(2597 BC approx), Chuanshyuh(2513 BC approx), Yaur(2145 BC approx) and Shuhn(2042 BC). The Shuhn dynasty was followed by the Hsia; but the year given in the book by Maurice Cotterell for Hsia reign is a much later one—1989 BC(See M. Cotterell, *The Terracota Warriors The Secret Codes of the Emperor's Army*, Headline Book Publishing, 2003, p.171). As of now, we do not know much about the earlier dynasties.

In recent years, however, a group of Chinese archaeologists have revised the earlier opinion about the origin of the Chinese civilisation. Contrary to the previous view that placed its beginning at a period 5,000 years backwards from now, it is now believed that the roots of the nation could be traced 8,000 to 10,000 years back in time. The archaeologists have unearthed China's earliest painting, writing, coloured pottery, crop seed strain specimen and buildings showing the emergence of an urban society from a rural one at Dadiwan Ruins in the Kansu province of north-west China. Those early cultural relics, so far unrecorded in any history book, belong to five ancient periods dating back to 8,000 years ago i.e, about 6000 BC—a period which is earlier than the Mehergarh ruins of the Indus Valley Civilisation of the Indian sub-continent. Prof. Li Xueqin observed that the discovery of Dadiwan Ruins suggested that the origins of the Chinese civilisation should be far earlier than both the Shang and the Hsia dynasties. The excavations work conducted at the Jinsha Ruins(Jinsha being the name of an upstream tributary of China's longest Yangtze river) in the Sichuan province in south-western China, the findings coming out of the 5,000-year old Liangzhu culture in the Chekiang province of east China as also a number of other evidence show that these made their appearance in a period much before the advent of the Hsia, which incidentally was till recently not regarded as a historical dynasty.

Let us now go back to the coming of the Manchus. Since the advent of the Manchus as the ruling dynasty in China, something like a Sino-Manchu duality was evident in Chinese politics. The government was combination of Manchu and Chinese elements. Manchu had become the second official language in Peking, along with classical Chinese. Manchu officials and nobles were in the majority at court and the Manchus outnumbered the Chinese proportionately in the leading state offices. These privileges enabled them to lead a semi-parasitic life, which had given rise to much discontent among the Chinese. Thus anti-Manchu national feeling was all-pervasive.

In this connection, it is pertinent to point out certain important features of the history of China. Firstly, China has the longest historiographical tradition in the history of the world. It is frequently possible not only to know the year, but also the month and date of an event that took place. This was an unbroken tradition of written history, unparalleled anywhere else in the world. This unbroken tradition, according to Chinese scholars starts definitely from 844 BC, if not earlier. Secondly, there is no such thing as the Chinese alphabet. Chinese scripts are ideographic, not alphabetic. In fact, unlike any other language, the Chinese language is the longest living language in the history of the world. Thirdly, of all the countries in the world which had passed through the feudal stage of history, China is the country that had experienced feudalism for the longest period of time. In fact, if feudalism emerged in western Europe in the 5th century AD particularly after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD, and in India during the late Gupta period in the 5th-6th century AD, then it arose in China more than 1000 years back during the time of Confucius in the 6th century BC. This naturally made class contradictions and conflicts between the peasants and the lords more intense than those in any other country. This was the main reason why peasant uprisings in China—both in number as also in scale, depth and intensity—were much greater than those in any other country of the world. In fact, the first revolt of the peasants in the history of China took place in 209 BC against the Chin dynasty—the first feudal empire— and was led by Chen Tseng and Wu Kuang. It was these peasant revolts that constituted the motive force of Chinese history.

These rebellions were directed against the feudal system and its abuses. This system was dependent on and fed by the philosophy of Confucius which gave the system its real staying power. And the rebellious peasants in course of their rising also attacked Confucian symbols in their own way because, consciously or unconsciously, they felt that the two were integrally connected and that attacks on one automatically lead to launching attacks on the other.

CHAPTER : 4

The Hsia Dynasty (2207-1766 BC approx.)

For many years, the Hsia dynasty was regarded in the Western academic world as a part of a myth that the Chinese people had all along claimed to be part of their history. The Hsia dynasty was there in the oral tradition, but no archaeological evidence was found of it until 1959. In that year, excavations at Erlitous in the city of Yanshi uncovered what was most likely a capital of the Hsia ruling dynasty.

According to tradition, the Hsia dynasty was the first dynasty that ruled a state. According to one document, it began about 1994 BC and lasted till 1523 BC. Further excavations and analysis had pushed the beginning further backwards to 2070 BC by a team of Chinese archaeologists and somewhat earlier to 2026 BC by David Nivision, a Stanford University scholar. Repeated citations of ancient stories and legends implied a longer history and Cargji characters from Hungti Era of 26th century BC could not be discounted either. All these had pushed the beginning backwards to 2207 BC. In fact, the first historical dynasty of China, namely the Hsia dynasty, claimed a domain of 9 ancient prefectures and left its lineage in both the ancient Yue people on the south-eastern coast and the Uighur people in western China. It was certainly a real entity.

Origin of Hsia

The people of China believe that a human group named Hua were those agricultural settlers in the Yellow River area, who claim that Yangti(Fiery Lord) or Shen-nong the Divine Farmer(apprx.3168 BC) was their ancestor. Although "Hua", "Hua hsia" or "Hsia" had been generalized as the embodiment of orthodox Chinese who had descended from Yangti-Huangti lineages, the actual term came about only during the time of Lord Yu, i.e., several hundred years after Huangti's times.

The 'Hsia' came from the title of Count Hsia that Lord Yu received

from Lord Yao as the fief in Yangti located either in Honan or Shansi. Liu Chiyu pointed out that after the demise of Hsia, whoever stayed in Shansi/Shensi provinces continued to call themselves 'Hsia' people. As for example, the Chou king Wenwang eulogized the eastward flow of Feng-shui River as Lord Yu's accomplishment and numerous records of the Chou dynasty stated that they were descendants of the Lord Yu, the founder of the Hsia dynasty. The rulers of a part of southern Shansi described themselves as riding on Hsia-chariots. An official of the Chin principality preferred to be known as *Hsia-zi* or son of Hsia people because his mother was a *Chin-ren* or Chin people. In the ancient classics also, during south-north dynasties, occasional usage of the word *Hsia-ren* or the Hsia people, had been adopted to distinguish between the Chinese living in the Sichuan province and the barbarian people living in that region. All these show that the Chinese were very much proud of their ancient tradition and the fact that they associated themselves so much with the Hsia world that the authenticity of the Hsia ancestry and the presence of a Hsia ruling dynasty cannot be doubted.

The Hsia dynasty was founded by Yu, known also as the "Chinese Noah" or the Great Engineer. The Hsia people lived on loess plains formed by alluvial deposits suitable for primitive farming. Their territory extended from western Honan and southern Shansi eastwards along Huang Ho(Yellow River) to the point where Honan, Hopei and Shantung provinces shook hands and then proceeded south to Hunan and north to Hopei. It was an area the like of which gave birth to other riparian civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus Valley and other parts of the world. It is said that King Yu succeeded in 'mastering the waters' by hydraulic conservancy works and made the territory safe from floods and well irrigated for agriculture. The people practised agriculture and sericulture, knew the use of bronze weapons and tools and used chariots for war. The ruling families used elaborate and dramatic rituals to confirm their power to govern. The rulers often acted as shamans, communicating with spirits for help and guidance. It is said that during that period, the principle of choosing leaders by election was violated and a new hereditary system came into being. The establishment of hereditary monarchy signified a clear break with the tribal past, thereby eliminating the function of the tribe as an organization representing the will of all its members

and taking care of its own affairs. What was emerging was a state apparatus and a society divided into antagonistic classes. Ancient records, now regarded as at least partially accurate, list 17 Hsia kings.

The Chinese legends would have us believe that during the rule of the Hsia dynasty, nine bronze cauldrons were cast with pictures of maps showing the various regions of the country with their mountains and rivers, plants and animals, as a guide for intending travellers to distant places. The Chinese scholar, Cao Wanru says that although no evidence of the existence of the cauldron has till date been found, the drawing of maps on utensils 4,000 years or more ago is not impossible. In fact, few such maps have survived the wear and tear of many centuries.

Like all subsequent dynasties, it continued to rule until it lost the 'Mandate of Heaven' by misgovernment and tyranny. A series of uprisings by the common people, opposition from court officials and other tribes ultimately put an end to Hsia rule. Tradition has it that Shang Thang (Tang) took this opportunity to revolt, defeat Chieh (Jie), the last Hsia ruler, and overthrow the Hsia dynasty. Even though no known examples of Hsia writing survive, they almost certainly had a writing system that was a precursor of the Shang dynasty's "oracle bones".

Was the Hsia culture a continuation of the Yangshao 'pre-historic' culture? Andersson hints that it might simply be a semi-legendary memory of what was perhaps the dominant focal point of the Yangshao culture. Hsu Chung-Shu also subscribes to this opinion. Scholars like Erkes, however, are of the opinion that the Hsia dynasty was a historical dynasty. Creel writes that the character *hsia* never appears on the oracle-bone inscriptions with the meaning of a state, but concludes that there probably was some kind of integrated community which had that name. Around the C.6 BC, it was often used to denote the group of states that possessed full Chinese culture as opposed to those which did not. Creel put forward the rather bold suggestion that the 'conception of a Hsia State became concretized as a semi-conscious fiction forming part of the campaign of propaganda with which the Chou people prepared and then legitimized, ... their conquest of the Shang'. Therefore, it is better for us to treat this question still as an open question.

Fiscal System of the Hsia dynasty

One important source on the fiscal history of this dynasty is "The Tribute System of the Yu" which incidentally is the title of a document in the classic *Book of History*. According to this source, the whole kingdom at that time, according to the Chinese historian, Hu Jichuang(*A Concise History of the Chinese Economic Thought*) was divided into nine regions which shows that they had developed an administrative set up. All the land was divided into three classes according to fertility—upper, middle and lower. And each category was again subdivided into three grades—upper, middle and lower. This was known as the "three classes and nine grades" system. ,The fertility of the land in each region was fixed by the central government. Side by side, tax rates were also divided into three classes with nine grades. However, as Hu says, the fertility grade of the land assigned to a given region did not necessarily correspond to the legally prescribed tax rate. The tribute system of Yu should be explained in order to realize why the tax rate could be higher and lower than the fertility grade. Lord Yu had explained it in detail.

The tributes to be given to the royal court by every region were mentioned clearly. These had to consist of gold, salt, silk, wood, pearls, foxes or big tortoises in specific quantities. At the time of the fixation of tribute, a number of factors were taken into consideration. The nature of the fertility of the soil was no doubt one important factor; other factors comprised the distance of the tributary state from the capital, the possibility of water transportation to the area, the value of the local products as also the state of the economic development of the vassal state. This being the situation, a given region's burden of tribute could naturally be higher or lower than its officially assigned land-fertility grade. According to this system again, some regions despite the low fertility of their land, could have to pay more taxes because of the fact that these areas were nearer to the capital and had better water transportation. This principle is called the3 doctrine of equal sacrifice which many succeeding Chinese ruling dynasties adopted as a guiding principle, even if they never put it into total practice. In fact, "The Tribute System of Yu" is the first ancient record of this principle.

CHAPTER : 5

The Shang (yin) Dynasty (Around 17th Century to 11th Century BC)

The Shang dynasty was the earliest to have a written history. It was also called the Yin dynasty as it transferred the capital in the last stage to Yin located at the down-stream region of the Yellow River. There is no definite opinion about the duration of the Shang dynasty. J.Mason Gentzler makes it 1751-1123 BC. More or less similar is the observation by other scholars who place it between 1766 and 1122 BC. Goodrich has not dealt with this question. The Chinese official version is that it extended from about 16th to 11th century BC.J. Needham places the beginning at early 17th century. According to *Commentary on Confucius' Spring & Autumn Annals* by Tszuo Chhing-ming, it had a history of 600 years. So this question is still an open question.

The political centre of the Shang is at Anyang, systematically excavated since 1928. The descriptive material concerning these operations comes largely from the accounts of Shih Chang-ju. The remains are confined to an area 6km x 4 km along both banks of the River Honan. Most important are those at Hsiao-tun and at His-pei kang, the royal cemetery whose burial pits, with the elaborate furnishings, have been compared to those excavated at Ur in West Asia.

At Hsiao-tun, a village 3km northwest of the Anyang town wall, the area excavated by the Academia Sinica, divided into nine grids, reflects the four phases: prehistoric(Neolithic), pre-dynastic Shang, Yin Shang, and post-Shang. The more elaborate architectural remains(mainly walls and foundations of tamped earth; stone-working in buildings does not appear to have been utilized by the Shang), at Grids A and B, the latter associated with a number of sacrificial pits, imply a complex of royal status-palace and temple (See L.M. Yong.

'The Shang of Ancient Chia' in *Current Anthropology* Vol.23, No.3, June 1982, pp.311-14).

Sources:

Archaeologists came to know about this civilization first from excavations conducted in Anyang in Honan during 1928-33 along the River Huan, a tributary of the Huang Ho, although some of these were discovered first in 1899. For many years during the late 19th century, peasants in course of tilling their soil near Anyang often dug out curious pieces of bones. These were sold to drug-stores as 'dragon-bones' for medicine. In 1902, Wang Kuo-Wei and Lo Chen-Yii recognized their full significance. This discovery pushed the philology, linguistics as also history of China foe nearly a thousand years. In 1904, Sun-I-Jang deciphered those writings and from then on these came to be known as the **Oracle-bone-Inscriptions**, the earliest primary source on the history of the Shang period.

The oracle-bones were employed for a method of divination and may have originated a little before the Shang. The Shang nobles often sought the divine will through oracles and used a method of divination by which a spot on a tortoise shell or an animal bone was heated until it cracked and the oracle was then interpreted on the basis of the pattern of the cracks. This method has been called scapulimancy, since the scapulae or shoulder blades of cattle were often used. In many cases, the question and the answer and sometimes the subsequent events were written on the bone or shell.

The ancient Chinese believed that the natural elements were the exertion of some mystical power. When there were floods, drought, lightning and thunder, or some big events, like the royal hunting, journeys and military campaigns, the ancients, through divination, would predict the future by "reading" the messages of nature. The divination performer first drilled holes on the flat surface of the tortoise shell or a piece of bull scapula to get a small circular pit. A heated bronze point was then applied to the edge of the pit, and observations were taken from the cracking which resulted on the other side of the bone. Ideally, these cracks consisted of a main line with a small spur going off at an angle, producing the shape that was used for the character 'to divine'. The relationships of angle, shape and size of the small crack to the large determined the answer, which

was then interpreted as 'favourable' (good omen) or 'unfavourable' (bad omen) after the question and inscribed accordingly. These for the most part concerned rain, the success of crops, the advisability of undertaking hunts or military campaigns, or allowing royal comings and goings (For more details, see William Watson, *Early Civilization in China*). All the dates and results of divination were written down on the shells or animal bones, which, in fact, became the earliest historical document with writing symbols. Oracle-bone inscriptions were first discovered in Hsiao-tun lying in the north-western part of Anyang County. According to preliminary research, those contained 4500 characters. These oracle-bone inscriptions are the earliest historical records known to us and are invaluable for the study of the Shang dynasty.

Besides oracle-bones, there are other primary sources as well. The engravings on Shang bronzes are an important form of documentation. The number of inscribed characters on bronze products ranged from a few to as many as 45. These inscriptions are generally called *jin wen*(chin wen), i.e., writings on bronzes or *zhong ding wen*(tszong ting wen) i.e., writings on bells and tripods. There are also some historical records written on bamboo slips or silk. The main part of what has been preserved, so far as the Shang period is concerned, is contained in the **Book of History** (*Shang Shu*). This is a collection of political documents not only of the Shang but also of the later periods. It has about twenty papers on Shang and Chou history that are reliable and more or less contemporaneous with the historical events they covered. These include accounts of historical figures, speeches and events. It can be said that the way in which the material is presented shows a concrete step forward in making conscious historical records as compared to the bronze inscriptions. Another source, the **Book of Odes** (*Shih Ching*) contains, besides other things, five "Sacrificial Odes of Shang", most of which were works of later times. The odes are highly valuable as historical ad historical documents throwing light on historical conditions. The names of the rulers of the Shang dynasty are to be found in the "Chronicle of Yin" in Ssuma Chhien's *Shih Chi*. It names 13 generations from Shie (Xie), the first eminent leader of the Shang people, to King Thang(Tang) who founded the Shang dynasty. Between Thang and King Chou, the last Shang ruler, there were 30

kings in all. The names of these kings as recorded in the "Chronicle of Yin" agree in general with those inscribed on the oracle-bones.

Origin:

The origin of the Shang dynasty, according to legend, lies in an ancient tribe living on the lower reaches of the Huang Ho River. Shang originally was the name of a nomadic tribe or clan named Tzu whose founding ancestor was mythologically reputed to have been born from an egg dropped by a blackbird(See L.M. Yong's article 'The Shang of Ancient China' cited above). This human group moved from one place to another until it finally settled in Shange'iu of Honan. In course of time, due to their internal social needs and probably through contacts with the more advanced Chinese tribes, it gradually took to agriculture. Sometime around 18th/17th century BC, we do not know exactly when, their leader, Thang, annexed most of the neighbouring tribal territories. In his struggle for supremacy, he promoted agricultural production to sustain his military campaigns, made alliance with those tribes that submitted to his will and conquered those that resisted. In the final battle, Hsia king Chieh was captured. This marked the beginning of Shang rule in the history of China.

Political History:

The Shang royal dynasty was divided into two segments and consisted of 44 rulers, the first 14 defined as pre-dynastic lords and the remaining 30 as kings. The dynasty was established by King Thang (Tang). The Shang moved its capital five times under the three kings from Shie to Shiang Thu (Xiang Tu), and three times after Shiang Thu during the eleven generations from Chang Ruo to Thang. These moves took place along the Huang Ho River in Shantung (Shandong) and Honan(Henan) provinces. Shang rule became powerful under Shiang Thu, its influence extending eastward to Mount Thai (Tai) and north to the coast of Bohai Sea. It grew stronger under Thang, who was called Thang Yi. In late 1974, archaeological workers conducted excavation work along with peasants in the Panlungcheng area, Hungpi County, Hupeh province, five kilometers north of the Wuhan city. Their work led to the discovery of the remains of a city of the mid-Shang period at Panlungcheng, the first to be unearthed in the Yangtze Valley region. It proved beyond doubt that the Shang

culture spread its influence from the Huang Ho region to the Yangtze Valley. Shangchhiu (Shangqiu) gradually developed as the capital city with government buildings, palaces, temples etc.

After the death of Thang, as his eldest son Thai Ting(Tai Ding) had died young, he was succeeded by Thai Ting's younger brother Wai Ping(Wai Bing) who in turn was succeeded by another brother, Tszong Ren(Zhong Ren). A few years later, Thai Ting's son Thai Chia(Tai Jia) became the fourth king of the Shang dynasty. This marked the beginning of a period of stability under six kings from Thai Chia to Thai Wu. Thai Wu was followed by Tszong Ting (Zhong Ding) to the throne and it led to a series of struggles for the throne and the internal conflicts within the nobility intensified. With the weakening of centralised power, small states also renounced their allegiance to the Shang. Conditions improved somewhat under the rule of King Tszu Yi, the first successor of Tszong Ting. Oracle-bone inscriptions show that sacrifices were offered to three kings together—Thai Yi, Thai Chia and Tszu Yi. However, struggles for the throne continued unabated throughout the period from Tszong Ting to Yang Chia.

During the reign of Pan Geng, the Shang shifted its capital to Yin(modern Anyang in Honan), laying a new foundation for Shang rule which from then on came to be known also as **Yin dynasty**(or Yin-Shang dynasty). One of its kings, Wu Ting(Wu Ding) made great efforts to consolidate his position and launched many military expeditions against surrounding tribes and states. These campaigns centred on Shansi, northern Shansi and Inner Mongolia. For each campaign, Wu Ting conscripted three to five thousand men. The more powerful nomadic tribe Gui Fang, which lived in Shansi, Inner Mongolia and further north, resisted the forces of Wu Ting for three years before they were conquered. The Chiang fang tribe in the north-west and Ching Chu(Jing Chu) tribe in the south were also defeated. Wu Ting's reign lasted 59 years.

Wu Ting was succeeded by Tszu Geng and then by Tszu Chia(Zu Jia). The rulers who followed Tszu Chia spent time in pleasurable pursuits and paid little attention to state affairs, while social contradictions deepened. The last two kings were Ti Yi (Di Yi) and Ti Shin(Di Xin), the latter being known in history as a tyrant. He devised many cruel laws and means of torture, oppressing and

exploiting the slaves and common people. He led a life of debauchery with companions from the nobility. By tradition, the old nobles held power in Shang. But towards the end of the dynasty, the centralized autocracy set aside the "elders" and favoured only those who were congenial to the king. This aggravated the conflicts among the nobility and caused internal dissension and utter confusion. King Wu of the Chou (Zhou) dynasty took advantage of this opportunity to launch an attack and overthrow the Shang dynasty.

The State machinery:

The Shang rulers had developed a powerful state machinery. The state power of the Shang dynasty was exercised by the king and the slave-owning nobility. The king was assisted by a number of ministers and vice-ministers. Other officials with religious functions were shamans, the recorders and the diviners. An interesting feature of ancient China is that there was no separate priesthood there; the ministers themselves acted as religious officials. Others took charge of military affairs, production etc. The official posts were mostly hereditary for members of noble families.

The Shang rulers had developed a large and powerful standing army by the standards of those times. Oracle-bone inscriptions state that "the king has set up three army units, right, centre and left". The total number of soldiers is not known to us. However, this much is known that King Wu Ting once employed 13,000 men against the Chiang Fang tribe of the north-west. The core of the army consisted of the nobility, while the soldiers were mainly common people. A large number of slaves were pressed into service as infantrymen or for the performance of miscellaneous duties. Sometimes a clan constituted a unit of the army. The oracles record orders for the "three clans", "five clans" or "a clan with many sons" to go to battle. Was there any clan army fighting for the Shang king on demand, apart from those directly under the Shang kings and having no group or clan identity? It appears that though it was a class society, the features of the old tribal world had still not totally disappeared. The army was armed with bronze weapons such as axe, battle-axe, lance, spear, sword, javelin, helmet, bronze battle-axe with iron-edge and leather shield. In the late Shang period, chariots became the principal combat force. Each chariot was drawn by two horses and carried three soldiers

clad in armour—one driving, one holding a lance or spear and the third carrying bow and arrows; alongside the chariots marched the infantry. The number of soldiers in war usually varied from three to five thousand and could reach thirty thousand.

The Shang kings claimed that their first ancestor was the son of the Lord on High on whose command the dynasty had been founded. Thus a central element in Shang religion was the identification of the earliest royal ancestor with supreme god. It seems the idea arose in China more than twenty five centuries before the idea of 'divine right monarchy' emerged in Europe in the 16th and 17th century AD. In fact, the Shang kings, as they claimed, were born to become masters of the people and became gods after death. While they lived they ruled over the living, and after they died they ruled over the dead. In remote antiquity, the tribal chiefs who had worked for the good of the people and contributed to their common cause were regarded as gods. The Shang still regarded their chiefs as gods, but they were gods who stood above the people and ruled them as kings, got themselves alienated from them and so were no longer the servants of the people.

Shang Administration

Although we still suffer from paucity of data regarding the Shang administration, historians and archaeologists used oracle-bone inscriptions and other scattered data as primary sources and provided some idea about the picture of government in those days long gone by. According to Kwang-chih Chang, the Shang ruler conceived of himself as utterly without peer. He referred to himself as "I, The One Man" or "I, The Unique One". There was hardly any sense of shared power; he governed all, dominated all, and all official acts were conducted in his name(See K.Chang's *Shang Civilization*, New Haven Yale 1980). He is known to have governed China as a powerful father figure who, in the opinion of Jack L. Dull, looked on everyone else as a member of his family and therefore as under his absolute control(See his article captioned 'The evolution of Government in China' in Paul S. Ropp ed, *Heritage of China Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization*, Berkeley, 1990, pp.56-57). However, considering the existence of the slave society of the time, such attitude towards the subjects was akin to that of the master to his cattle than that of the father to his children.

The Shang territory was divided into zones. At the centre of those stood the Shang capital (which was shifted time and again during the dynasty) and its immediate surroundings which were under the control of the Shang ruler and his appointees. The second zone, surrounding the central one, was in the hands of administrators appointed by the Shang ruler. The third zone was in the hands of royal appointees; but, unlike those in the first two zones, they seeded to have been mostly concerned with defending the realm from its foes, implying thereby that it was located on the frontier areas. The fourth zone included the enemies of the Shang, some of whom were under tribal chieftains, who were given titles on offering allegiance to the Shang throne.

The highest official was the equivalent of the chancellor and several are known by name. The founder of the Shang dynasty relied heavily on his chancellor, I Yin, who enjoyed much prestige and importance in Shang history and received offerings in the same manner as the deceased Shang rulers. Below him were various clerical officials and scribes as well as diviners. Agricultural officials, mentioned in the oracle-bones, operated in the central area and perhaps also in the second zone(For details, see David N. Keightley, *Sources of Shang History: The Oracle-Bone Inscriptions of Bronze Age China*, Berkeley, 1978).

Local administration was in the hands of members of the Shang ruling house—men who were not members of the ruling family but who were treated as such, may be just like in-laws.

Beginning of the Chinese Language:

We have pointed out that in the oracle-bone inscriptions dug out in Anyang, 4500 characters or words have been discovered. This naturally signifies their knowledge of writing. But the origin of the writing is somewhat obscure. Some scholars suggest connections with Western Asia on the basis of the similarity between the pictographic forms of certain words used by both eastern and western scribes. However, there was a gap of some 2000 years between the pictographs of Egypt and those of China. L.C.Goodrich argues, on the basis of this fact that the early Chinese devised these signs for such words as they had for sun and moon independently, as did the Sioux and Ojibways in North America. The arguments for an

independent origin are strengthened also by the fact that certain written signs, such as those for the numerals 5,6,7,8,9,10 and for 22 characters indicating Chinese cycle, have no parallels elsewhere. It seems that there was some extended development within the Yellow River Valley itself, for many of the signs have a purely Chinese connotation. Needham suggests that Chinese writing developed from its first pictograms about 1600 BC i.e., from the beginning of the Shang period. Robert Churchill, however, argues that the first Chinese writing appeared somewhat later, around 1400-1200 BC.

Thus while its antiquity is much less than Mesopotamian cuneiform and Egyptian hieroglyphic writing, the Chinese character lives still today while the others have long been dead. In fact, Shang remains provide the earliest and most complete record of Chinese writing.

The Chinese language is unique not only in that it is the oldest surviving language in the world, but also in that it is non-phonetic. This language has served a very important purpose. There is no doubt that there are certain disadvantages of a non-phonetic language. However, the interesting point here is that the written form of the Chinese language was the same in all parts of China, although the pronunciation varies from one place to another. The fact is that a southern and northern Chinese write the same characters though they pronounce them differently. Dun J. Lee argues that the sharing of a common written language meant a common identity for all Chinese despite great distances between them. It definitely helps promote national feeling and identity—a situation that is unthinkable in a country like India. 'When it pointed out that the word *Chinese* is more a cultural than a racial term, we can easily see what an important role the language has played in the development of China as a nation', as Dun J. Lee has remarked.

Society and Economy:

It is generally accepted that the Shang people and probably also the Yangshao people who preceded them were predominantly agricultural. This has raised an important debate. The debate is not whether the Shang people were agricultural or not, but whether there was a pastoral life of the Chinese people at all. Creel refuses to accept that the Chinese people ever passed through a pastoral period. He

argues that milk and milk products have been absent from their diet since time immemorial and pastoral metaphors are exceedingly rare, if present at all in the most ancient writings that are available. Needham, however, disagrees and says that many words in the Chinese language which have the meaning 'good' or other related meanings, 'are based on radical no.123, *yang*, sheep'. It can be said on our part that agriculture cannot appear all on a sudden; it signifies some sort of settled life. And the need for settled life can be felt only by those who are unsettled people—the nomads, i.e., pastoral people, no matter whether concrete evidence for it is available or not.

The Chinese historian Bai Shouyi writes that animal husbandry had a long history already in Shang times. In the late Shang period, the number of cattle and sheep used in a single sacrifice might be 300-400, sometimes going up to 1000. The oracle-bone inscriptions time and again mention hunting, e.g., in one hunting trip, 384 deer were captured and hunting was common for quite a long time. The inscriptions also record the kind of sexes of the animals, showing the developed state of animal husbandry.

The basis of the Shang economy was **agriculture** and the crops were also numerous. In the ruins of the Shang capital at Tszengehou, Honan, remains of rice have been found. In the oracle-bone inscriptions we find the names of the main cereals and some other plants, e.g., *he (*growing grain); *shu* (sticky millet); *su* (rice or millet in husk); *mai* (wheat); *ji* (millet); *mi* (rice); *sang* (mulberry) and *ma* (hemp). In the ruins of Yin at Anyang have been discovered cellars for storing grain. Some of the walls and floors of these cellars had been plastered with a mixture of mud and straw. The character *ling* (granary) in the oracle-bone inscriptions probably applied to such cellars.

The Shang culture was the culture of the **bronze-age**. In fact, bronze metallurgy was the most highly developed among the handicrafts. It is said that it was the most advanced bronze-working civilizations of the world. Remains of bronze foundries under the direct control of the royal house have been discovered at Tszengchou (Zhengzhou), Anyang and other places. The new material consisted of copper oxide, tin and lead and charcoal was used for fuel. It appears that the state possibly exercised monopoly over this precious metal. The famous large rectangular cauldron *si mu wu ting* can be taken

as a representative of the advanced bronze metallurgy of the late Shang. The height is 133 cm to the top of the handles, the opening 110 X 78 cm, and the weight 875 kgs. The furnace used for smelting bronze was made of red pottery with a thick inside wall and could stand high temperature without breaking. Usually, it could only take 12.5 kgs of molten bronze. To make such a cauldron, 70-80 furnaces were required. A couple of hundred skilled craftsmen performing different tasks were needed, not including those making the mould and handling transport. Chemical analysis has shown the tripod to contain 84.77 per cent of copper, 11.64 per cent of tin and 2.79 per cent of lead. The bronze foundries making cauldrons of such a size, which required a sizeable number of skilled artisans, was so big to be under private possession. In all probability, it was under state control.

The excavation at the site of Tomb no. 2 at Lichiatsui 200m. east of Panlungcheng brought to light 60 or so burial objects in the tomb including bronze ceremonial vessels, and weapons. The largest was a bronze *ting* (tripod), 55 cm high. Others were *li* and *yen (*cooking vessels), *kuei* (food vessels), a tall-legged wash-basin, *chia*, *chueh* and *ho* (wine vessels) and the weapons, *mao* (spear), *ko* (dagger-axe) and *fu* (axe). This is the only full set of bronzes of the Erhlikang period of the Shang dynasty known so far. Besides these, we have a bronze weapon *yueh* (halberd), 41 cm long, cast with a dragon design. Its owner must have been an influential member of the slave-owning nobility, as ordinary slave-owners were not in a position to possess weapons of this size. Needham writes that the magnificent workmanship of the sacrificial vessel surpasses that of all later work. Metal parts of wheeled vehicles were being made of bronze and this practice became fairly common during that period.

In the summer of 1986, as was reported in *Beijing Review* (Vol.32.no.27 July 3-9, 1989) two sacrificial pits of the Shang were discovered by archaeologists at Shanshingtui (Sanxingdui) in the Sichuan province of China. Some 800 rare cultural relics were unearthed. Among those were included a large amount of jade and stone ware, a bronze standing human statue, bronze human heads, face masks, a bronze tree with rare animals and pheasants, as well as branches, leaves and fruit on it, a gold stick and pure gold face guards. A gold stick carved with water birds and designs of human faces has

been dug out of Pit no.1. It is believed to be the symbol of royal power. From Pit no.2 was discovered one 1.72-meter-tall life-size standing human statue having a high corona and two bracelets on its feet, with two hands placed in front of the chest. In fact, ever since some local farmers accidentally discovered a pit of jade stone when they dug a channel 60 years ago, Sanshingtui has been haunted by archaeologists. In the early 1960s it was observed that somewhere around this site was probably one of the central cities of the ancient State of Shu. By the early 1980s, large amounts of jade, pottery and bone ware, dozens of house foundations of the Shang dynasty, pottery kilns and ash pits were discovered there. These discoveries made experts feel that this site had a cultural history of more than 200 years. It was also felt that the rich variety of the relics and their abundance made it clear that this was no ordinary historical site. It is now held by the Chinese archaeologists that this site was possibly the ancient capital of the State of Shu that was hit by a devastating flood during the time of King Tu Yu and ultimately disappeared.

Iron had also been discovered and was already in use, though definitely on a very limited scale. In recent years, iron-blade bronze battle-axes of the Shang had been unearthed, but no farm implements made of iron have been dug out. Tools were made mainly of wood or stone, such as wooden spades to dig earth, stone hoes for weeding grass and stone sickles for harvesting. In fact, hundreds of sickles have been found near the royal palace among the Yin ruins, most of which show signs of having been used. Unlike farm implements made of wood or stone, handicraft tools such as axe, adze, knife, saw, chisel, drill, awl, needle etc. were made of bronze. As the soil was fertile beyond compare, tools made of wood and stone were sufficient and there was hardly any need for making iron tools. It is obvious that wood workers, stone workers, bronze-smiths and iron-smiths comprised a sizeable number of the artisan group with bronze-smiths, in all probability, occupying a position most important than the others. The Shang period falls in the transitional phase between bronze age and iron age with the former taking precedence over the latter.

Artisans were employed in other sectors as well. Besides the common grey, black and red pottery, there were white and hard pottery and primitive porcelain clay fired in kiln. The white pottery, as is

reported, has a clear, pure colour with fine texture and beautiful decorations. The surface has a thin, blue or yellowish green glaze, the body is greyish white, the structure is solid and the vessels emit a metallic sound when struck. The vessels were still quite rough, but may be said to be primitive enough.

Linen and *silk textiles* formed other branches of the productive activities of the Shang. Even on the bronzes, traces of silk fabrics have been found—rough silk with plain design and damask with lozenge design.

During the Shang period, *wine* of different kinds was brewed. Sweet wine was made of rice and fragrant wine of black millet. Wine vessels have been dug out of the Yin ruins and these show that drinking wine was a fairly common practice among the nobility.

An important feature of the Shang period was the use of *cowrie shells*. The shell was first used as an ornament; later on, with the growth of exchange, it began to be used as money. In fact, the first kind of currency used in Chinese history was sea shell which came into use sometime during the Shang period. Their wide use may be explained in their beauty, shape and convenience for counting. At that time they were generally called as *paopei*(*baobei)* i.e., precious shells. Some copper shells have also been unearthed from the Shang ruins. The oracle-bone inscriptions record the acquisition and bestowal of shells. The documents of the later Chou period mention traders driving ox-carts carrying their wares to distant places. At Tszengchou(Zhengzhou) and Anyang, hard pottery with impressed design, sea-shells, clam-shells, whale and tortoise-scapulae(used for divination) have been found. Where the cowries came from is somewhat uncertain. Perhaps these came from the Pacific Coast south of the Yangtze Valley. Besides cowries, it is quite likely that the carapace and sternum of the land-tortoise meant for divination came from the same coastal region through the Yangtze estuary. It appears also that Panlungchang area near the Wuhan city in Hupeh province in the Yangtze Valley acted as, if we may call it so, the southern frontier or gateway of the Shang kingdom.

During the Shang period, the tribal economy had almost disappeared, classes emerged and land was being tilled with slave labour. It was a slave society undergoing a process of development. The slaves were engaged in farming, domestication of animals and

primitive handicrafts as also household work. The oracle-bone inscriptions record using war prisoners for farming and animal husbandry. In the oracle-bone inscriptions, the character *chung*(meaning many people), resembles a picture of three men under the sun and has commonly interpreted as slaves toiling in the field. In a large tomb at Wuguan village at Anyang, which had been twice plundered, 79 skeletons were found, buried with the man the tomb was made for. The other tombs of the Yin ruins also contain the remains of people buried alive with the dead or killed as sacrifices. It is generally explained that these people were slaves. In Panlungcheng, Hupeh province, three skeletons of immolated slaves were found inside the tomb on its west and north sides. This custom persisted long into the Chou period. Creel and some others state that during that period, matriarchal traces seem to have been replaced by a rigidly patriarchal society.

Culture and Science

Under the Shang, a complex religious system developed on part of which was human sacrifice. The system included beliefs in a the world of spirit and practice of many kinds of magic, either to assuage or to call forth spirits and forces of nature to prevent harm or to give support to human life. This religious system had rituals such as divination, sacrifices, shamanistic practices, ritualistic and orgiastic dances, drinking bouts and fertility festivals.

In the Shang period, the ancestors of the ruling clan leaders, both male and female, were worshipped, offered sacrifices and were objects of divination. The highest of these spirits was *Shang-ti* or the Lord-on-High—a powerful personified deity in Heaven, regarded as the supreme ancestor of the Shang clan.

Under Heaven was Earth, *Ti.* Heaven the male principle, *Yang*, and Earth, the female principle, *Yin*, were believed to provide the balance of nature that had to be retained by magic. Human welfare depended on the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth. On Earth, there were gods of the localities, of rivers and of mountains such as *Hou-to*, the god of the soil, who was to protect the harvests, and *Hou-chi*, the god of grain, who was deified by the founder of the Shang dynasty. These were primitive beliefs that could be found in most ancient societies.

As in early stages of human societies, fertility rites seem to have been the occasion of yearly festivities. An echo of such fertility cults, as Franz Michael states in his book captioned *China through the Ages History of a civilization*, can be found in the account of festivals organized by the last ruler of the Shang house, during which naked maidens and young men pursued each other through gardens. For later Confucian historians, these orgiastic festivals were examples of degeneration that led to the loss of the Mandate of Heaven and the downfall of the Shang dynasty. There have been other indications that procreation, both in human propagation and in agricultural production, was the aim of religious rites. In fact, the ancestor itself had as one of its goals the continuous fertility of the clan. This was indicated by the symbol for ancestor depicted on the oracle bones, a symbol that, as Chang Kwang-chi believes to have been derived from the sign of phallus(*Shang Civilization*) and the character of the god of the soil, likewise believed to have been derived from a phallic image. The magic of relating the forces of nature to human existence and survival was thus expressed in this direct and natural way. The magic was enhanced not only by the trances and the ritual dances of shamanistic practices but also by the heavy use of alcoholic beverages for which the Shang became famous of infamous—one of the sins that in Confucian belief led to the Shang's downfall.

East Asia is known as a 'bamboo' civilization because of the extensive use of these plants in various fields. Among those applications, as Creel has noted, was the making of books of tablets for which bamboo was used. The lines of characters were written on slips of wood or bamboo and the slips held together with two lines of chords. The writing-brush has also been shown to belong to the Shang period.

The Shang period witnessed remarkable development in different branches of science. Before we go on to discuss those things, we should refer, however briefly, to eighty oracle-bone ideographs, as pointed out by Needham. We are referring to those because those ideographs throw lights on the origins of Chinese scientific terms. Of those eighty, only two can be considered purely geometrical symbols, while the rest are drawings of one type or another. What is remarkable about them is that the characters concerned with technology and communication are the most numerous of all. They,

at least demonstrate how technical terminology for everyday thinking and experimentation actually arose. We are not going into this any further.

One important scientific development was that of the *calendar.* The oracle-bone inscriptions make it clear that the Shang used a lunar calendar that was combined with solar year through the addition of an intercalary month, once in a few years, to make up the difference between a year of 12 lunar months and a solar year. Years and months were recorded by numerals in oracle-bone inscriptions. There is no doubt that the use of a calendar was of a great significance to the development of historical records. Most of the oracle-bone inscriptions only recorded the day and not the year or month. Some recorded all three, but with the day preceding the recorded event, followed by month and then the year. Thus while records of some type existed, they were not complete. In fact, only through a study of both written sources and archaeological findings are we able to get more comprehensive information about the Shang.

One unresolved question, that about the antiquity of the *hsiu* was resolved as a result of the discovery of oracle-bones in Anyang. Hsiu stands for lunar mansions, i.e., sheds made of matting—believed to be the temporary resting places of the sun, moon and planets, especially of the moon, the greatest night luminary. Needham writes that the system of the *hsiu* was growing up gradually from the middle of the Shang, since its nucleus can be found in the fourteenth century B.C. This was the time of the ruler Wu Ting(1339 to 1281 B.C.) and on inscribed bones of his reign, there are mentions of stars. In fact, of greatest importance were Niao hsing, the Bird Star or Constellation, to be identified with Chu chhiao (Red Bird), i.e., the 25th *hsiu*. The fact the Shang people were conscious of the casting of shadows in evident, according to Needham, from a purely literary word *tse* , which stands for the late afternoon when sun is setting. In fact, ancient bone forms of this *tse* show the sun and the man's shadow at different angles.

The Shang period added to our knowledge of meterology in other ways also. There are references to the rainbow in the Anyang oracle-bone inscriptions. The modern term for it, *hung* perpetuates the idea of the Shang people that it was a visible rain-dragon. The origin of maps and geographical treatises goes back to the Shang and even to

Hsia. In fact, under both as also Choù, there were special officials for this. The Shang people had some knowledge about Geology and related sciences also. One Shang pictograph represented a bird's eye-view of the salt pans in which was evaporated or an attempt to draw a large crystal of salt.

Calendar was needed for a variety of purposes. It was needed to distinguish between seasons, to identify the crops suitable for cultivation for a particular period etc. In fact, the development of production was closely connected with the advance of scientific knowledge. The knowledge of astronomy was essential to determine the seasons for farming and animal husbandry. Side by side, mathematics and mechanics helped water conservancy in the cities. It is pertinent to refer to the tradition according to which Shie, the founder of the Shang royal lineage, worked together with Yu in harnessing the rivers and that Ming, Thang's ancestor eight generations ago, was drowned while doing the same work.

A water-lifting device that demonstrates the principle of parallelogram of forces, called the *hudou*, first appeared during Yin time. Here a water-bailing wicker bucket, the *hudou*, is fastened between two ropes that are pulled jointly by two persons standing apart ashore. The oracle-bone inscriptions provide records of solar and lunar eclipses and of some constellations and newly discovered stars. The Shang calendar shows the important results of astronomy and mathematics of that time. Goodrich says that although the men who prepared the Shang calendar were less advanced than the Babylonian in their knowledge of stars, their performance was impressive.

There were other developments in the scientific and technological fields also. *Hsia* hsiao *Tszeng* (Lesser Annuary of the Hsia Dynasty) contains original records concerning *silk-worm rearing* during the late Hsia and early Shang dynasty. It says: "In the third lunar month mulberry trees have to be pruned and women begin to rear silk-worms". Bone and tortoise-shell inscriptions of the Shang dynasty include the characters for silk-worm, mulberry tree, silk floss and silk fabrics. There are also oracle-bone inscriptions concerning sericulture intact. Among these is the advice to consider raising silkworms only after as many as nine divinations. Sericulture had certainly become a very serious and important during the Shang

period. Oracle-bone inscriptions on tortoise-shells and bones excavated in the 13th century BC ruins near Anyang, Honan, record parasitological diseases, tooth decay and various other ailments. There is also a rudimentary classification of diseases according to location. It is, however, not known what types of medicines were used for the treatment of those diseases during that period.

It is generally believed that cities appear along with the appearance of class society. But the techniques of building cities vary from people to people and place to place. The Shang cities were planned cities, each having palaces, temples and workshops built according to plan. It also implies that civic administration was also strong. The main characteristic of Chinese architecture is the existence of wooden structures and these had taken a concrete shape by then. The foundation of the palaces and temples of Yin ruins were generally of pounded earth, one of them as large as 46.7 by 10.7 meters. The remains of the stone or bronze vases of the rows of columns reveal the complicated structure of the palaces with heavy gates and compound rooms. These building foundations, with a north-south or east-west direction, formed groups of mutually compatible structures. The cross-section of Panlungchen's north wall shows that its technique of building with wooden boards for rammed earth was almost the same as that of the Shang city at Chengchow, Honan. In both, layers of rammed earth were used for the main part of the city wall, with a sloping lateral section of the same material that served to hold the boards in place while the main body was rammed down. Needless to say, such similarities of technique showed a close national and cultural relationship which could not have been a reality without political unity.

With each principal building foundation of rammed-earth, there usually were numerous ritual burials in the surroundings. In Hsiao-tun, 852 men, 10 oxen or buffalos, 15 horses, 18 sheep, 24 dogs and 5 chariots had been sacrificed to pay, as they believed, their eternal homage to the ancestral spirits. The human sacrifices included whole units of foot soldiers and charioteers, perhaps prisoners of war who were executed and buried. Among the human sacrifices unearthed in the royal temples and cemeteries, there are groups identified as food-serving slaves with food and wine vessels made of bronze(For details, see Wai-Kam Ho, 'Shang and Chow Bronzes' in *The Bulletin of the*

Cleveland Museum of Art, Vol.51, No.7, September 1964; William Watson, *Early Civilization in China*, London Thames and Hudson, 1966).

Most important of the discoveries here was the foundation of a large palace in the north -eastern part of the city. It stood on higher ground where it could dominate the city and display its pomp and power. The style and technique of the Shang period showed that applied mechanics was already fairly developed. These exercised a far-reaching influence on the architecture of later ages.

"Chinese mathematics" was defined by the Chinese in ancient times as the "art of calculation"(*suan chu*). This art was both a practical and spiritual one, and covered a wide range of subjects from religion and astronomy to water control and administration. The first true evidence of mathematical activity in China can be found in numeration symbols on tortoise shells and flat cattle bones (the oracle-bones), dated from the Shang dynasty. These numeral inscriptions contain both tally and code symbols which are based on a decimal system, and they employed a positional value system. This shows that the Chinese were one of the first civilizations to understand and efficiently use a decimal numeration system. In fact, the numeration system used in the modern world had its origin 34 centuries ago in Shang China. However, mathematics in China began much earlier in the development of the Chinese calendar, flood control measures, administration and so on. The need to control the flood-prone rivers of China, such as the Yanhtze and Yellow Rivers, was an important factor in the development of mathematics in China.

Recently, the Chinese archaeologists are studying the DNA samples extracted from the bones of horses unearthed from such ancient sites as the Yin ruins in central China's Henan province, the Laoniupo site in Xian, capital of north-west China's Shansi province and the Chianzhangda site in east China's Shantung province. A large number of remains of domestic horses and carriages have been found in the relic sites dating back to the late Shang dynasty. The fact is that horses earlier than the late Shang dynasty were seldom found in China. And it is difficult for archaeologists to determine whether the few remains of horses earlier than the Shang dynasty belong to domestic horses or wild ones. Cai Dawei, a Chinese archaeologist enquiring into this remarked: "The lack of evidence at the early period

of domestication of horses and the 'sudden emergence' of tamed horses in the late Shang dynasty makes the history of horses in China very confusing". The domestication of horses had a great influence on the development of human civilization. They provided human beings not only with meat and milk, but also were used for transportation and war.

The Shang state was established about 17th century BC. It spread its suzerainty and culture over the middle and lower reaches of the Huang Ho River, taking within its fold many scattered primitive tribes on the way. The Shang dynasty left the conquered tribes to manage their own affairs so long as they recognized Shang suzerainty. In the Spring and Autumn Period (770-475 BC), descendants of the Shang rulers described the territory of the state as "extending thousands of li". They also referred to the war expeditions of King Wu Ting of the later Shang towards Chinchu around Hupeh, indicating the sway of Shang over a vast region extending from the Yellow River to the middle Yangtze in the south. Since 1954, as a result of archaeological discoveries, remains of middle and late Shang city sites have been located at Panlungchang and Yuanliwan in Huangpi county, Changchiashan in Kiangling county, and Shamoashan in Hanyang county—all in Hupeh province—as well as Wucheng in Chingkiang county in Kiangsi province. These findings testify to the spread of Shang culture in new regions. The ruins of the city walls, palaces, tombs and handicrafts excavated at Panlungcheng point to the strong uniformity of culture between this area and that in Honan and its vicinity 3000 years ago. The existence of this uniformity, which laid the historical basis for China's unification, accelerated the development of the Yangtze Valley.

CHAPTER : 6

The Chou Dynasty
(12th/11th century B.C.-256 B.C.)

The Shang dynasty was overthrown by the Chou dynasty. Historians have divided the Chou period into two parts—the **Western Chou Dynasty** and the **Eastern Chou Dynasty**. The early Chou dynasty is known as the Western Chou dynasty as its capital was located in the west. Likewise, the later Chou dynasty is known as the Eastern Chou dynasty as the capital was shifted to the east. Like the Shang rule, whose time span is still far from definite, scholars are still not in agreement regarding the date of the beginning of Chou rule. However, on other dates, unlike the Shang, we are on firmer grounds.

Western Chou Dynasty (1123/1066 BC-771 BC)

The beginning, as we have said, is still somewhat obscure. J.M. Gentzler places it at 1123 BC. Some others place it at 1100 BC. Bai Shouyi traces it to the mid-11th century, while J. Needham, on the basis of astronomical evidence arising from the study of eclipses mentioned in the oracle bones, suggests that it began probably in the mid or latter half of 11th century BC. Hopefully, archaeologists would be able to arrive at a definite in course of time. The Western Chou ends in 771 BC. The period lasted about three centuries, with 12 kings belonging to 11 generations one succeeding the other. The Eastern Chou starts from then on and continues till 256 BC.

Sources

Oracle-bone inscriptions are the earliest primary sources for reconstructing the history of the Chou dynasty. The characters on the oracle-bones, unlike those during the Shang period, are so small that they can be read only with a magnifier. The bronze vessels can also be utilized as source-materials. In fact, there is a clear increase in writing on these vessels from the Chou period, not only in the

number of pieces but also in the length of the inscriptions. AS for example, an inscription called *ling yi*, which dates from the early Chou, has 187 characters; another named *Mao gong ting* of the late Chou has 499 characters. A large number of bronze inscriptions from the Chou dynasty had about 100 to 300 characters each, and show a wider vocabulary than the oracle-bone inscriptions.

The bronze inscriptions deal with a variety of things. Most of them are written in praise of great achievements or to celebrate grants or rewards. Others include description of military expeditions, capture of war prisoners, grants of servants, slaves, land, chariots, horses, banners, dresses, ceremonial vessels, gold and shell articles. Some provide data about scale of warfare and number of servants bestowed, while some others record the circumstances concerning land grants and enfeoffment.

It is interesting to point out that many Chou inscriptions end with the statement: " For eternal preservation by our descendants". This is, in all probability, like handing down of the inscribed bronzes from generation to generation. It also means that they were written in a way that they could be utilized as historical records. It also betrays their sense of history and therefore these inscriptions represent an advance over oracle-bone texts. Some of the bronzes do not record the time, but there are more bronzes than oracle-bones which furnish years and dates. Unlike the oracle-bones, the bronzes indicate the time by using the month-day-year or year-month-day sequence. The latter sequence subsequently became the common practice in Chinese historical records.

There are also some Chou historical records written on bamboo slips or silk. These are preserved in the **Book of History** (*Shang Shu*) and the **Book of Odes** (*Shih Ching*). The former is a collection of political documents from the Shang, the Western Chou and the Spring and Autumn Periods. The latter deals with the Western Chou and the Spring and Autumn periods. Both these works had a far-reaching influence on the philosophy, political ideas and literature of later times. The **Book of History** contains about 20 papers of historical value on the Shang and Chou history relating more or less to contemporary historical figures, speeches and events. According to Chinese historians, the way in which the material is presented shows a step forward in making conscious historical records as

compared to the bronze inscriptions. The **Book of Odes** contains 74 "Lesser Odes", 31 "Greater Odes" and 31 "Sacrificial Odes of Chou". These were written mainly during the time of the Chou dynasty and deal generally with events and offerings to gods. It also includes 160 "Lessens from the States", 4 "Praise-odes of Lu" and 5 "Sacrificial Odes of Shang", most of which were composed later.

It is pertinent to point out that all these primary source-materials—oracle-bone inscriptions, bronze inscriptions, **Book of History** and the **Book of Odes**—developed independently of each other and do not furnish a complete year-by-year record of those periods. The situation started to change towards the end of the Western Chou. In fact, it was from 841 BC that the Chou royal house began to keep annals and some vassal states also did the same. Henceforth China had historical records for each year. Joseph Needham remarked that the Chinese could claim to have the greatest historiographical tradition of the world. And it is frequently possible to know not only the year, but also the month and day when a certain event took place. Thus for the history of China, the year 841 BC marked the beginning of conscious, systematic records.

Origin

The origin of the Chou, like that of Shang who preceded them, is somewhat obscure. This much is known that the people were an ancient tribe on the loess plateau in the middle reaches of the Weishui(Wai River) embracing the Kansu and Shensi provinces in Western China. Their conquest of the Shang area nearly coincided with the advent of the Aryans in India. Both the Chou and the Aryans were Bronze-age chariot fighters and both were contemporaries. It seems that they were pastoral rather than agricultural and definitely less civilized than the Shang whom they had overthrown. However, they quickly adopted the agricultural character of the Chinese civilization.

He earliest ancestor of the Chou people was Chhi, who, according to tradition, was worshipped as the god of agriculture. One of his distant descendants several generations down the line was Chi Li(Ji Li) or King Chi, during whose reign the Chou state grew strong. Like his predecessors, he also fought against the Rong Di tribes of the North and North-west China and the captured prisoners were

converted into slaves. During that period, the relations between Chou and Shang became closer and matrimonial relations strengthened the bond further. Chi Li was succeeded by his son Chang who later became the celebrated King Wen of the Chou. By then, the Shang king, Chou, earned the hatred of the nobility by his efforts to recruit slaves of certain tribes and states. Chang proposed an agreement among the slave-owners. It authorized searches for run-away slaves, who should be returned to their respective owners and must not be hidden by anyone. This agreement naturally won the support of the nobility and raised King Wen's prestige among the tribes and states. It was a period of bloody conflicts among tribes. Wen carried out a series of campaigns against many tribes and subdued them.

King Wen was succeeded by his son, Chi Fa(Ji Fa) as King Wu. In the final campaign against King Chou of the Shang, he amassed a huge army, consisting of 300 war chariots, a shock-brigade of 3000 men and 45,000 armoured soldiers and was joined by the tribes of the south-west. The Chou and Shang armies fought a decisive battle at Muye and the Shang soldiers revolted against their master. King Wu captured Tszaoge(Zhaoge) and the Shang king ended his life by burning himself. That marked the beginning of Chou rule in the history of ancient China.

Chou rule in China continued for nearly nine centuries. During that time, great advances were made in many directions. The prolonged rule of the Chou dynasty is divided into two sub-stages: Western (Early) and Eastern (Later) Chou—so called because of the location of the two capitals in the west and east.

Political History

The capital city of the Chou was Hao that was far removed from the east where the duke of Chou was carrying on his military campaigns. Luoyi, now Luoyang city the province of Honan, was then selected as the eastern capital and as a strategic center from which the eastern side could be controlled politically and militarily. The newly-formed Chou dynasty could be stabilized only after the completion of the eastern expedition of the duke of Chou and the setting up of the eastern capital.

After King Wu's death, the vanquished Shang people rose in rebellion. Chou Kung, duke of Chou and brother of King Wu sent a

big expeditionary force eastwards. In the process he conquered more than fifty states, wiped out all remnants of Shang power in the east, and extended Chou rule to the lower reaches of the Hoangho River valley. To consolidate the rule of the Chou, the duke of Chou handed over the newly conquered territories and the people living there to the nobles of the house of Chou and also to some other nobles. The sons of King Wen, King Wu and Chou Kung and others of the same royal house were made princes and granted fiefs if the territories of present-day provinces of Shansi, Honan, Shantung, Hopei and Hupei. It is said that Chou Kung created 71 principalities. Numerous petty states also fell victims to the conquering hordes of the Chou rulers. These states became vassals and as vassals, these obeyed the decrees of Chou and paid tribute to its rulers.

After the death of King Wu, the duke of Chou was in charge of affairs for seven years until King Cheng came of age. King Cheng and his son King Kang ruled for four decades—a period marked by political stability and economic prosperity. Under the next rulers, King Chao and King Mu, the strength of the dynasty was at its height and continuous wars were fought against the peoples of the surrounding areas. In the period following the death of King Mu and throughout the reigns of King Kung, King Yi, King Shiao, King Yi and King Li, the prestige of the dynasty gradually declined and contradictions between the royal house and the people came to the fore in a big way. The reign of King Li was particularly oppressive with capital residents and freemen exploited more mercilessly than ever before. Freedom of expression was suppressed and all public discussion was banned. Armed rebellions of the people followed, the royal house was attacked and the king was forced to flee. Then the duke of Chou and the duke of Chao took charge of the government. This period was known in Chinese history as *gonghe*. The first year of *gonghe* was 841 BC. This year is important because from then on we have accurate unbroken dates of recorded history in China.

At the height of its power, the Chou domain extended south across the Changjiang River; northeast to present-day Liaoning, west to Kansu, and east to Shantung. In the northeast the Shu Shen tribe inhabiting the vast area from Songhuachiang to the Heliochiang rivers presented King Wu with an arrow that had a head made of stone and

a shaft made of wood as a token of support to the Chou. King Wu, on his part, inscribed some words on the shaft and gave it to the state of Chen which kept it in its treasury down to the Spring and Autumn Period.

After the death of King Li 14 years since his flight, Prince Ching was enthroned as King Xuan. The new king carried out wars against some neighbouring tribes and states and won some victories. However, he was defeated in the hands of Chiang Rung, Tiao Rung and Ben Rung tribes who at one time inhabited the Kansu and Shansi provinces. King Xuan's reign witnessed prosperity for some time. However, the contradictions between the Chou state and the peoples in the adjoining regions and the social contradictions in the areas controlled by the Chou were not resolved. To add to these, incessant wars took away much of the dynasty's manpower and material resources.

King You succeeded King Xuan and during his reign, the existing contradictions grew worse. The sharpness of the contradictions can be seen from the following passage taken from the *Book of Odes* : " Some people leisurely stay at home, some work untiringly for the country, some lie in bed doing nothing, some always have to go to war, some drink and make merry, some are fearful of meeting disaster, some talk nonsense or gossip, some have to do all kinds of work". Bai Shouyi writes that during that period, the struggles between big and small slave-owners became sharper with the small slave-owners complaining: "People have land, you take it away; people own slaves, you seize them!". Uninterrupted famine and earthquakes made thousands of people homeless. The Chou dynasty was now faces with a terrible crisis.

During King You's reign, the neighbouring peoples made continuous attacks. There were also rebellions from within.Marquis Shen, father of Queen Shen who was dismissed by King You, attacked the king in collaboration with Chuan Rung tribe, and Lu, Zeng and other states. As the vassals refused to come to the king's rescue, King You was killed in battle. The capital was sacked and its treasures plundered. All control over the old capital was lost by 771 BC. King Ping, successor to King You, moved the capital to Luoyi in the east with the support of some of the nobles and vassals. From that year, the dynasty came to be known as the Eastern Chou dynasty.

State Machinery:

The Chou rulers took over from their Shang predecessors a state machinery and they strengthened them to a large extent. Otherwise one cannot explain such a long reign spanning several centuries. The king and the vassal lords had each his own armed forces. As in the Shang dynasty, the main fighting force was composed of soldiers riding in horses.

The Chou rulers also established a powerful bureaucracy. Of the various officials under the king, the *taishi* or *taibao* was the most powerful. There were other ministers in various branches of the state. There was a minister of civil administration and land affairs (*situ*), a minister of military affairs (*sima*), a minister of construction (*sikong*), a minister of justice (*sikou*), and officials in charge of agriculture. Most of the official posts were held by nobles by hereditary right; the fiefs were also hereditary. The political organization in each fiefdom was similar to that at the royal court.

In order to maintain the rule of the dynasty, rites and laws were formulated. These were known as inalienable Chou rites. The "Rites" stressed absolute observance of the hierarchy, rituals and ceremonies under the slave system of the Western Chou dynasty, strict distinction between the social position of the slave-owner and the slave and absolute obedience by the slave to the slave owner. The slave-owning aristocrats under the Chou had to be content with their rank and title and not overstep the limits set by those "Rites".

Punishments were meted out to keep the slaves and common people under control while the function of the rites was to maintain the social hierarchy within the nobility.

The power of the king was bestowed by Heaven or the Lord on High. Like the Shang, the Chou dynasty identified its ancestral god with the supreme god. The Chou admitted that the Shang kings were the elder sons of the Lord on High, but as they had failed to live up to expectations, the Heaven shifted its favour from the east to the west. Bai Shouyi states that the supreme god of the Shang appears to be autocratic, while that of Chou, though autocratic, was also rational. The Shang god belongs to Shang alone, while the Chou stood above dynasties and tribes. In this respect, the Chou ideology was more developed than that of the Shang. This also reflected the political ideas of the Chou dynasty in its early period.

Society and Economy:

How can we characterize the Chinese society under Chou rule? While Bai Shouyi regards it as a slave society, other Chinese scholars such as Jian Bozan, Shaozheng and Hu Hua seem to argue that feudal elements might have made its appearance during that period.

The Chou regime was based on a coalition of the royal and other noble clans, with or without the same surname as the royal family. It was under the supreme authority of the king. In each of the fiefs, power was based on a similar coalition of the regal family and other noble clans with or without the same surname, this time under the authority of the fief-holder. Under Chou rule, there were many fiefdoms, some ruled by clans with the same surname as the royal house and some ruled by clans with different surnames. The Chou enfeoffment policy, undoubtedly, played an important part in the development of production. The principal fiefdoms were Chin, Wei and Yan to the north of the Huang-ho River, and Xu, Cai, Chen, Sung, Cao, Lu and Chi to the south of the river. The state of Wu in the far southeast gradually became important like Chin and Zheng which were established later. It has been suggested by Soviet scholars that in its structure, the Western Chou state resembled the Hittite empire, where the princes, governors, other royal vassals owed their supreme rulers tribute and military assistance, but ruled their territories independently(Boris Piotrovsky & Grigory Bongard-Levin ed. *Ancient Civilizations of East & West*).

The Chou enfeoffment policy no doubt benefited vassals who were related to the royal house in some way or other. It also preserved the power of the noble clans which did not challenge its authority. In this way the support base of the Chou regime was extended.

During that period, a patriarchal clan system was established. Within the clan there was a distinction between major and minor lineages. The king made the eldest son born of his wife heir to the throne. This was the major lineage. The other sons born of his wife and his concubines were the heads of minor lineages. This eldest son, heir to the title and estate of his father, was called *zong zi*(heir apparent). The king of Chou was the *zong zi* of the kingdom. The prince was the *zong zi* of the state. The minister was the *zong zi* of his family. In the opinion of Jian Bozan and others, these *zong zi*, of different political ranks, were actually landowners with landholdings

of different sizes. It is notable that the royal house intermarried with the ruling families of the fiefdoms and came to be related to those with different surnames. The king of Chou of a younger generation called the vassal lords with the same surname paternal uncles and those with different surnames maternal uncles. Such a clan relationship, together with intermarriages, strengthened the ties between the royal house and the vassal lords.

There is no doubt that the slave system was well-developed under Chou rule. The king, vassals and government officials owned slaves in large numbers and forced them to create wealth for themselves. The first source of slaves was undoubtedly prisoners of war. After the Chou conquest, a large number of the Shang people and their slaves became the slaves of the Chou rulers. Bai Shouyi quotes ancient records to argue that King Wu attacked 99 states, taking a large number of people as prisoners who possibly became slaves. In one battle fought against the Kui Fang tribe, 13,081 men and many chariots, horses, cattle and sheep were captured, as is evident from an inscription on the Ykung vessel. Another source of slaves was the convicts or penal slaves. The common people who revolted against the ruling elite were considered to have committed crimes against the state. They and the criminals were often converted into slaves and forced to do labour. However, these people were not slaves for life; they remained slaves for the period of their punishment after which they were generally released.

During the Shang-Yin epoch, wars had mostly been in the nature of armed raids, whereas the Chou campaigns aimed at conquering territories and pumping manpower out of them. The first Western Chou monarch Wuwang took the title *wang* or "Warrior king" from the Shangs. According to *Shuching*, a collection of historical legends, he appealed to the warriors before the battle at Mu-yeh: "Brave warriors! Do not kill those that surrender, let them work on our western fields!" The stanzas of an early Chou ode in the *Book of Odes* (*Shihching*) betray the empire-building spirit: "The Heaven stretches far// But there is not an inch of land under the Heaven that is not the king's// On the whole coast washed by the seas//Only the king's servants live on this land". According to narrative sources, the Chous sent the "obstreperous Yins" to work on the construction of their second capital Ching-chou; later they must have been used

as slave-labourers on the crown-estate. Thirteen other Shang clans were enslaved and resettled on the possession of Wuwang's close relatives.

The royal house, as under the Shang, was the owner of all land in the country. The royal domain around the capital was directly under the control of the crown, while areas outside that region were distributed among the aristocrats as fiefs. These fiefs were hereditary and could be handled more or less freely by their owners. The land system was possibly one of ownership by the slave-holding nobility. The state structure of the Western Chou dynasty resembled the Hittite empire, where the princes, governors and other royal vassals owed their supreme ruler tribute and military assistance but ruled their territories independently.

From the bronze inscriptions we get to know of the grants by the Chou rulers and nobles of tens, hundreds or thousands of slave families. In ancient China, slaves were organized on a family basis though this was not of all slaves. In those inscriptions, gifts of slaves are often mentioned along with gifts of all kinds of utensils, money, cattle, horses and land. This shows that the slaves were treated like any other commodity. They could be bought and sold. It is evident from one inscription that five slaves were worth a horse and a bundle of silk. The deed of settlement on one of the vessels lists "two hundred bare-footed families in ginger tatters" (a symbol of shameful punishment). The early Chou odes of the Shihching express terror at imminent slavery: "pain and groans in my grieving heart:/Oh my poor people! Without guilt/It will be made into slaves!" The state distributed the captives, hunted run-away slaves down and returned them to their owners. The *wang* had a force of his own, which was kept at the expense of the crown estate managed by 'land supervisors'(*Xitu*) and tilled mostly by slaves, although free people were also employed there.

It can be said that there were fewer cases of slaughtering slaves and prisoners of war under Chou rule than under the Shang, but it was not uncommon to bury people alive to accompany the dead who happened to be their masters. However, the number of such unfortunate 'wretched of the earth' driven by force to their graves were smaller in number under the Chou than under the Shang. This implies that under the Chou, a greater number of slave-force could

be utilized for productive purposes. In the bronze inscriptions, there are many instances of slaves being forced to do productive labour either in the field or in the branch of handicrafts.

A poem written during the Chou dynasty describes thousands of people working in the fields. The grain of the slave-owner piled on the farms. According to the poem, a thousand granaries and ten thousand baskets should be prepared to handle the grain. This is, in all probability, a description of a bumper harvest with the slaves working collectively on the field.

Land was tilled not only by the slaves, but also by the peasants. Within the rural commune, land was from time to time redistributed on the basis of fertility. An able-bodied peasant could use 100 mu of the best land and 50 mu of the fallow; or 100 mu of middle-grade land and 100 mu of fallow; or 100 mu of poor land and 200 mu of fallow. Between one field and another, irrigation canals and roads were built. This appears to have been the farming system that was later referred to as *jingtian* or the "well fields".

The peasant clans lived together in the rural communes, called *yi* or *she* and were surrounded by open fields. They had their own houses, gardens or orchards, however small in size. Women were brought together for "making ropes at night'. Peasants were given land by the commune to produce grain, vegetables, fruits, domestic animals, fuel and clothing so that they could support themselves. Now if they made their own clothing, then they were part-time artisans also. Their lands were divided into two parts. One was tilled for the state, known as *kung-t'ien*. The other was meant for private owners, known as *ssut'ien*.

During the Western Chou period, improved farming implements, greater variety of agricultural products and an enlarged scale of agriculture prove that the level of production was more improved than that on the earlier period. The main method of farming was known as *ou geng* or "two men working together". This made deeper ploughing possible. The system of fallow cultivation was an improvement on the age-old slash-and-burn method. The technique of simple drainage and irrigation was also improved as were weeding, seed breeding and pest control. Crops grown were varied such as rice, sorghum, sticky millet, wheat, beans, millet, mulberry, hemp, melons and fruits of different types.

There was also sufficient development of handicraft industry. After conquering the Shang, the Chou kings sent the "six clans of Yin people" and "seven clans of the Yin people" to the states of Lu and Wei. Among them were artisans of different types such as rope-makers, makers of vessels of two different types, potters as well as makers of flags, horse harnesses, files and axes, fences and mallets. These captured artisans were utilized to develop Chou handicraft industries.

There were sectors in the handicraft industry that catered to the needs of the army and the nobility such as the construction of chariots. Here bronze casting was needed. As more fiefs were set up, the construction of buildings also developed.

Handicrafts during the Chou period were under state control. Slaves, cattle and horses, arms and jewellery were exchanged through barter. In the capital, there were markets under the control of the Chou state like the markets in ancient India under the Maurya rule. Both cowries and metals were used as mediums of exchange, with strings of shells as units of calculation. The barter system was the dominant form of transaction among the common people.

The existence of such an economy presupposes the development of a well-defined market network. Hu Jichuang argues that the market organization during the Western Chou dynasty included one striking peculiarity. All market activity, except for small village fairs, was under direct state supervision. We may note here in passing that in ancient India under the *Arthasastra* state, there was also strict state supervision and control not only in the towns but also in the villages. The units of production were small and dispersed over a vast area and that was probably why the government could not exercise any direct control over production. However, the government exercised control over the market, and by so doing, over the economic activities to some extent.

The regular market was situated in the capital city of the kingdom. Other markets were also occasionally set up along important highways fifty *li* (1/2 kilometre) apart. The market was held thrice a day: in the morning, at noon and in the evening. All day, anyone who entered into or went out of the market had to pass through a gate, where officials, each with a whip in his hand, kept a watchful eye on the people. We know from the *Rites of the Chou Dynasty* that market

stalls were assigned definite places and every transaction had to be carried out in accordance with the state-regulated procedures and at officially regulated prices. Anyone' charged with the offence of violating the regulations, would be punished by the state officials. In order to take out or in any goods from the market, a certificate was to be procured from the Chief Controller of the Market.

The stalls where the goods were displayed for sale were generally arranged according to price levels and so expensive and cheap goods were kept separately. This practice apparently prevented buyers of different social classes from mixing together. Some goods were strictly forbidden from the market. Articles such as jade-ware, formal robes and court carriages, utensils used in the ancestral temple of the royal family as also for sacrifices and military weapons belonged to this category.

Another special feature of the Western Chou dynasty was price control measures. There was a government official named price master who fixed the prices of different products. No article could be put on sale in the market without it being priced by the price master, and all future changes in price could be made by him only. It was the price master again who conducted the buying and selling for the government. The price control policy was applied both to the regular markets in the capital, other big cities and also to improvised markets.

No less striking is the fact that usury during that period was carried out openly by the government. This system was peculiar to ancient China and was not evident anywhere else in the ancient world. The government regulated government lending, with different provisions for different kinds of loans such as for making sacrifices to the gods, for productive activities etc. The whole business of money-lending was under the management of the House of Currency—an official organ, and the interest charged annually formed a considerable part of government revenue.

It is known to us that the annual rate of interest was 5%; actually, the rate was much higher if one considers the fact that some rate of interest had to be refunded three or more months after the contract was signed. That would make the rate as high as 10% to 20%. There was also the system of loans without interest—a benefit enjoyed only by the members of the ruling classes. The *Book of Rites* is quite

explicit on this point: "Those possess no manor need no provision for the instruments of sacrifice". "The rites do not extend to the common people". A very detailed description of the funeral ceremony is given in one of the chapters. In it, there is no word about this privilege being extended to the common people. There is no definite historical evidence to maintain that private money-lending co-existed with money-lending indulged in by the state. However, what we know is that in the Spring and Autumn Period immediately after the Western Chou dynasty, there were many private individuals who practised usury privately. Such an evidence tempts us to suggest that if this system could be well-known in the period immediately following the Western Chou period, then its origin could well be traced to the late Western Chou period, even though there is no concrete evidence of it even today.

Administration of the Land

There are a number of works that deal with the economic thought and land administration in the remote antiquity of China. Some are legends whose authenticity is not beyond doubt, but there are some others also which throw light on these activities and which appear to be genuine. Let us deal with them in some detail.

During the Western Chou dynasty, the relationship between labour and wealth seems to have been recognized. The motto of the "Inscription on the Coronation of Shoes" reads as follows: "Be serious in work, for through work one will become rich" (*The Decorum Ritual,* "The Coronation of King Wu"). The ruling group time and again preached the virtue of hard work, but, in reality, they detested it. In fact, the difference between mental labour and physical labour—one of the "three main differences"— had by then emerged with the appearance of class society in China. The idea of riches or wealth, in those days was based on material goods rather than money i.e., the natural property of society or its value in use. As for example, the wealth of a slave-owner was quantified by the amount of land under his possession, of a low-ranking official by the number of his carts and horses and of a peasant by the number of his domestic animals (*Book of Rites*). It is pertinent to point out that theoretically, "Under Heaven, every spot is the sovereign's ground", and the emperor granted the land to the aristocrats to acquire a certain income through

taxing and imposing innumerable cesses on the people. The state control over nature and natural objects was criticized by some thinkers of the time. As for example, Rui Liangfu, in his advice to King Li (878-962 BC), protested the government policy of monopolizing mountain and water resources for the profits of the state. He wrote: "With regard to material benefits, a myriad things produce them, and nature contains them. Once they are monopolized, there will be no end to the resulting harm. To the myriad things in the universe, everyone has a claim. How can anybody monopolize them? A king's duty is to bring material benefits and distribute them fairly among the people(upper and lower classes) so that the gods, human beings, and other forms of life will benefit to the fullest extent. A plebeian is called a thief if he appropriates things for himself. For a king to do so will certainly erode the people's support for him"(*Discourses on the States*, "Discourses of Chou"). Arguments such as these will appear to be quite interesting to the environmentalists of today.

Under the Chou, the land system that was prevalent was known as the nine-squares(*ching tien*) system. This was he land system in China's slave society by which the slave-owners exploited the slaves. In those days, land throughout the country belonged to the sovereign, the chieftain of the slave-owners; land was divided into squares in the shape of the Chinese ideograph meaning a well and parceled out to slave-owners at various levels who forced the slaves to cultivate it. The squares were at once units denoting the size of land by which the amount of a slave's labour was counted. So each and every square, big or small, was separated by earthen embankments or gullies.

In the writings of the Western Chou dynasty, **agriculture** was given the main emphasis. At the end of the 9th century BC, Duke Wen said: Agriculture is a matter of prime importance for the people, because it produces the material for sacrifices to the gods and allows for the multiplication of the population, the supply of commodities, the harmony of relationships and the prosperity and strength of the state (*Discourses on the States*, "Discourses of Chou").

Apart from agriculture, importance was also given to **handicrafts** and trade in the economic thinking during the Western Chou period. One of the important primary sources dealing with the technical level of the artisans is *Artificers' Record*. One passage described how King Wen formulated a trade policy to save his country from a severe

drought (*Lost Records of Chou*, "Ta Kuang"). He informed the traders that they would be given means of carriage, places of lodging, currency and other facilities in order to encourage the inflow of foodstuffs in his territory. Housing facilities were also arranged for the country traders. That commerce was regarded highly is attested by *The Monthly Ordinances*, a collection of ancient official records that summed up past experiences of agriculture and later served as an official manual of administration. As has been pointed out by Hu Jichuang, many of the well-known ancient statesmen in China during the Chou period took part in trading activities before they joined their official posts.

There is no doubt that the Western Chou dynasty was the first dynasty in China that, like the Maurya dynasty in India, brought about the political unification of large parts of China. With the aim of bringing about its consolidation, the Chou state formulated a **fiscal system** that sought to maintain a balance between its revenue earnings and expenditure. In the section entitled "Officials of Heaven" in the *Rites of the Chou Dynasty*, the following was written: " The prime minister is to make an estimate of state expenditure at the end of every year, when the five kinds of grain have been reaped. The financial plan has to be made on the basis of average revenue of thirty years, which in turn should be calculated on the basis of the land area utilized and the condition of the yearly harvest, fat or lean, and thereupon adjusting public expenditure to revenue". Such a principle of public finance has been described by the Chinese historians as the earliest one ever recorded in the history of the world's economic thought.

In those days, state income consisted mainly of grain, and storage of grain was a must that had to be done by the centralized state. The far-sightedness of the rulers is expressed in the following statement: "A country without a nine-year store of foodstuff shall be described as being in a state of deficiency, without a six-year store of foodstuff, in a state of emergency, and without a three-year store can no longer be called a country at all" (*Book of Rites*, "The Kingly System").

The **taxes** imposed on the people during the Western Chou dynasty were extracted from people engaged in occupations of nine types such as farmers, gardeners, handicraftsmen, merchants, foresters, fishermen, animal-breeders and fanciers. The ninth kind consisted

of persons without occupation who, ironically, had to pay taxes with a view to forcing them to take up some job. We, however, do not know whether work was available for all the people and whether the state offered them such. Taxes were generally paid in kind, though payment in cash was not totally unknown.

Land was divided into two categories. One was under the direct control of the emperor; the other was split into fiefs and distributed among the aristocrats. People who stayed in the royal domain had to pay a land tax and do some *corvee* or forced labour every year. The land tax was paid from yields and the more the land was located in areas nearer to the capital, the lesser was the amount of tax. Such a policy of discrimination was due to two reasons. One was that toiling people living near the capital bore a comparatively heavier labour service than those who stayed in distant places. Thus the burden on all toilers balanced out. The other reason was that the people who lived near the capital were generally members of the king's own tribe and so were taken to be more or less friendly whereas those living afar were of a different tribe—conquered by the king, and therefore they were likely to be hostile to the ruling clique. So they were liable to pay a higher tax.

Corvee or labour service was another onerous burden of the toiling people of China. It was pointed out that residents of the capital from twenty to sixty years of age and people who lived outside from fifteen to sixty five had to do corvee "no more than three days each year". Some people, who were either part of the establishment or were literally unable to do any work, were exempted. Ordinary people were never exempted.

Apparently, corvee for three days a year is not a burden at all, if one does not take into account many other strings attached to it. First, the stipulated three days' labour service excludes other services that people were forced to render, such as putting down their work to serve the king when the king arrived for hunting. This period must have taken several days, implying the loss of as many days work and income for the peasants. Second, if the labour service in question involved an urgent task, the service period was bound to be lengthened, and the total period could be anything. This also implied more distress for the peasants. Third, even if the period of service was exactly three days, the place where that service was to be rendered

might be, and usually was, not less than a hundred *li* from the place of his residence, so the total time spent for travelling to and fro as also for the waiting before the commencement of service might be many times the prescribed three days. To add to these, all the expenses incurred had to be borne by the person rendering that service. Thus, counting the total number of days and income lost both before and after the stipulated three days' labour service, the sum total would obviously be several weeks, if not several months altogether. And the total period could vary from year to year. The labour service in China bears resemblance to the labour services in Europe during the feudal period. A very heavy burden indeed!

The Western Chou government had its expenditure divided into disbursements of nine types. These were expenditures for sacrifices and worship, foreign affairs, for funerals and crop failures, entertainment, public works, for cattle fodder, awards and for other miscellaneous purposes. This was prepared on the basis of priority and clearly testifies to the priorities of the government at the time of spending. However, it was applicable to the central government only.

The *Book of History* contains a document entitled 'The Tribute System of Yu'—a statement concerning the fiscal system of the Hsia dynasty. The kingdom at that time was divided into nine regions. All the land was divided into three categories—upper, middle and lower—according to their fertility. Each category, in turn, was divided into three grades—upper, middle and lower. This system was called the "three classes and nine grades system". It was the Hsia state which decided the extent of fertility in each area. Tax rates were also divided into three classes with nine grades. However, it is interesting to note that the tax assigned to a category of land did not always conform to the fertility of that land. In fact, the fact that tax rate might be higher or lower than the fertility grade depended on the system of tribute.

The tributes to be paid by each region were specifically mentioned. The tribute from different regions had to consist of gold, salt, silk, wood, pearls, foxes, or big tortoises in big quantities. In fixing the amount of tribute along with the fertility grades of the land, other factors such as the distance of the tribute-paying state from the capital, the possibility of water transportation to the area, the value of local products and the state of development in each of those vassal states

were taken into consideration. As for example, some regions, well placed in the kingdom because of its proximity to the capital and better communication or water facility, could be higher taxes even if the soil was less fertile. This was the policy of equalizing tax burdens—a commentary on the clear perception and far-sightedness of the ruling classes. In fact, thinkers related to many succeeding dynasties used this principle—called the principle of equal sacrifice—as a guiding principle in their analyses of public finance. "The Tribute System of Yu", incidentally, is the first ancient record of this principle.

Science and Culture

During the Western Chou period, the climate of north China became colder. Marshlands were drained and forests cleared to bring more land under cultivation. The custom of livestock breeding declined. Urban settlements spread over a broad belt in eastern China from the northern steppes to the Yangtze. For obvious reasons these were built along rivers and surrounded by rammed earth walls. These walls offered the people protection both from the floods as also from the raids from the neighbouring tribes. It is known that that those earth walls were square or rectangular, the corners aligned on the cardinal points, with gates in the middle of each of the sides. All these betray sufficient knowledge on the part of the people of those times.

The culture no doubt was an improvement upon that of Shang. This is evident from artistic creations and from the form of ideographs used in the writing of that period. Jian Bozan and others state that the odes and songs in the *Book of Songs* and the orders of conferment and chronicles in the *Book of History* are more advanced, from the literary point of view, than those of Shang. Many inscriptions on bronze dating back to the later Western Chou period, still evoke interest. It is also clear that the Chou people had a more conception of natural and supernatural powers.

In those times, magnetic ladles were carved of lodestone as jade was carved. Jade carving had already attained a fairly high level by the Shang and Chou dynasties. Since 1953, China has discovered a great variety of glazed wares of the Shang and Chou periods at Earligang in Zhengzhou, Henan province; Tunshi in Anhui province as also in Kiangsu and Shensi provinces. They objects include wine vessels, bowls, vases, jars and stamped cups. These are fashioned of

kaolinic earth and are all of compact texture and lustrous appearance. As these have the characteristics of early porcelain, they are also called "primitive porcelain". It is known that metallic pins were employed in the treatment by acupuncture at least in the 8th century BC, if not earlier. As a result of excavations conducted during the early 1980s, gold pins designed for this therapy were dug out in a tomb attributed to the 3rd century BC, i.e., the Eastern Chou period in Mancheng county, Hobei province.

Eastern Chou Dynasty (770 BC-256 BC):

In 770 BC, King Ping shifted the centre of political power from the west to Luoyi—now called Luoyang—and thus the Eastern Chou Dynasty came into being. The total time span covered by the new dynasty was 514 years during which time 25 kings ruled. It is notable that the period from 722 BC, 49 years after the emergence of the Eastern Chou, to 481 BC, is known in history as the *Spring & Autumn Period*, and the period that followed till 221 BC is called the *Warring States Period*. In fact, *Spring & Autumn Period* refers to the period covered by the book **The Spring & Autumn Annals**. We may note here in passing that there are three definitions for the Warring States Period. One view puts the beginning at 475 BC, another at 476 BC, and the third at 403 BC. We have taken the third as the basis of our discussion. The intervening period of 76 years from 480 BC to 404 BC is considered an integral part of the Spring & Autumn Period.

Sources:

A number of historical works made their appearance during this period. Works such as the *Commentary on Confucius' Spring and Autumn Annals by Zuo Chiuming*, *The Discourses on the States, The Records of the Warring States* and the *Annals of the Bamboo Books* were all written during the Warring States Period. In the field, there were also remarkable developments. Long theoretical essays made their appearance in addition to narrative compositions. The Chu poets composed long lyrical poems, and the most important of them was Chu Tuan(340-278BC). The works of the Chu poets are known as *The Ballads of Chu* which, like the *Book of Songs*, constitute a particularly valuable part of China's literary heritage. Another remarkable work is the *Art of War* by Sun Tzu. It is a military treatise

prepared during the Warring States period and is considered to be one of the most important of the military texts in the Ancient World. No less important as a source was *The Book of Shang Yang* which is one of the major surviving classics of the ancient Chinese school of philosophy called Legalism or the School of Law.

Political History:

The eastward migration of the Western Chou was an important political event. Under the Western Chou, there were some 1,800 states, but the number decreased to 100 by the Spring and Autumn Period as a result of the conquest of small states by bigger ones. Some of these independent political entities were descendants of the Chous, others of the Yins.

Politically and religiously, all of them accepted the nominal powers of the Chou *wang*, who was believed to possess magical powers and regarded as the Son of Heaven. Soviets writers argue that compared to the Shang cults of ancestors and deification of various objects and forces of nature, the Chou cult of the Heaven as its earthly embodiment, was supra-tribal and inter-ethnic; it was, in fact, compatible with all the local community cults, but rose above all of them as kind of unifying principle. Together with the doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven, this cult sanctified the right of the Chou dynasty to rule all mankind under Heaven.

Let us now go back to the small states. Of the 100 states, about 12 were important politically. During the Warring States period, the number diminished to a large extent and only 7 important states along with some minor ones remained. All these were captured by the Chin. The beginning of the Eastern Chou period, the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period were periods of great upheavals and broad social changes. King Ping shifted his capital to the east and reestablished his power with the assistance of such states as Jin, Zheng, Wei and Chin.

In 403BC, the state of Jin was split up into three independent states, Han, Zhao and Wei. In 386 BC, the Tian family seized state power in Chhi. These four states along with Chin, Chu and Yan are known as the seven powers of the Warring states Period. Geographically, Chu was located in the south along the middle course of the Yangtze and was one of the largest kingdoms of ancient China.

Zhao was located in the north, Yan in the northeast, Chin in the west, Chi in the east, and Han and Wei in the centre.

The *Warring States Period* (475-221 BC) has been aptly called. As we have already seen, during that time China as the unified we now know today did not exist. The large territory we now know as China was split up into a number of autonomous small zones constantly competing with one another for political supremacy. In fact, the history of the period is one of alliance, counter-alliance, treaties made and unmade and quite naturally of warfare. In the course of the 4th century BC alone some seven lords took the title of king each, and there was even no pretence of loyalty to the emperor. It was a period marked by the political fragmentation of the country and called the Liehkuo period—the times of Individual States or the Multi-state epoch. As its name suggests, the Warring States Period was one in which the more powerful autonomous states vied with one another for control, swallowing up their small neighbours as and when they thought it necessary. About 25 small states—called 'feudal' by some scholars—paying only lip-service to Luoyang, fought against one another in order to gain independence. The first to get it was the state of Chhi in the province of Shantung. The state of Chhi was endowed with two very important forms of wealth. One was that it was the main source of salt obtained by the evaporation of sea-water. The other was that it was the leading state in the working of iron. Needham says that iron had been known in China by 500 BC(Joseph Needham, *The Shorter Science and Civilization in China-I*, Abridgement by Colin A. Ronan), long after it was used in India around 900 BC after its discovery at a place called Atranjikhera in Western UP. However, Bai Shouyi observes in his edited book entitled *An Outline History of China* that iron had been discovered and used as early as the Shang dynasty. In fact, the state of Chhi possessed an enviable iron-working technology that the Chou did not. This factor might have been a crucial factor in their bid for power. Later on, independence was also attained by the states of Sung, Chin, Chhin and Chhu.

Probably the most important political figure of the Warring States Period was Shang Yang, a native of Wei and sometimes referred to by his family name Kung-sun Yang. His *Book of Shang Yang* is a treatise on statecraft and fit to be compared with Kautilya's

Arthasastra and Machiavelli's *The Prince*. In 359 BC, Shang Yang launched his reform in Chin, a reform that historians describe as the most remarkable event in the Warring States Period. The views put forward in the Book were adopted by the state of Chin with the result that Chin ultimately could overtake its neighbours and united China under one political umbrella under one ruler. The first Chin emperor was called Ch'in Shih-Huang-ti, who established the first feudal empire in China in 221 BC. The readers will find some discussion on these two treatises in two different sections later in the same chapter.

The Warring States Period was terminated by the rise of the western hill-state of Ch'in and it was the Ch'in under the leadership of Shih Huang-ti who brought about the unification of China in 221BC. According to Ronald Fraser(*Lord of the East*) and Leonard Cottrell(*The Tiger of Ch'in*), this success can be attributed to the equipment of his armies with the long iron sword which, in the wake of the Iron Age revolution, rapidly replaced bronze weapons. According to Keith Buchanon, this Iron Age revolution—which began in the 7th or 6th centuries BC(which interestingly was the age when iron tools had come into use in India)—shows a remarkable parallel with the earlier Bronze Age revolution in the suddenness with which the new technology, and the refined aspects of that technology appeared. Thus the techniques of iron-casting, which in Europe dates from the late middle ages, dates long back in China to the 4th century BC.

Developments in Science and Technology

Great changes took place during the Warring States Period than in the preceding periods. Political reforms were initiated by enterprising rulers in their respective states. Men like Li Kui in Wei, Wu Chi in Chu and later Shang Yang in Chin could make a great impact on the history of China.

These changes were brought about principally by the discovery and use of iron. The earliest mention of iron in Chinese documents relates to the state of Jin where the legal code dated 513BC was cast in relief on an iron tripod, showing that the use of cast iron became known in China as early as the late 6th century BC. As is evident from the archaeological findings, iron was widely in use during the

Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period. Large numbers of iron moulds were unearthed in Xinglong County, Hepei province, and iron tools and weapons were also found in graves dating back to the Warring States Period in Huixian county in Henan province.

The use of iron tools made possible the production of improved farm and handicraft tools which, in turn, helped in the improvement of agriculture and handicrafts. It stimulated trade and the castles of the princes began to bloom into cities and towns. Each town during the Warring states Period had, on an average, a population of about 10,000 households. People knew something about exploring and mining iron. It was recorded then that wherever reddish-brown objects were seen in the mountains, there were likely to have been iron deposits underneath the soil. In fact, there were 3,609 mountains yielding iron. The county of Linzi, the capital of the state of Chi(modern Shantung province) which embraced a population of 70,000 households, had its iron-smelting site spread over 1,00,000 square metres. It has been observed by the Chinese archaeologists that at the iron mining site of Tonglu mountains, in Daye county, Hupei province, the mine tunnels supports were quite advanced and complete. This speaks much about their engineering skill. Facilities and installations for transportation, ventilation, and water drainage have also been found. In the late Spring and Autumn Period, craftsmen in the state of Wu already knew how to cast iron into sharp swords. In 513 BC, iron was collected as tax and the state of Jin made a tripod on which the entire criminal code was cast. All these show that iron metallurgy showed signs of development over the centuries.

The iron weapons since the Warring States Period consisted of armours, sticks, swords, broad swords, awls, halberds and daggers. A study of the steel swords and halberds unearthed in modern Yixian county, Hopei province show that those were very hard and strong. One really important invention was *sinan*, probably the first magnetic compass in the primitive period. This first came into use during the Warring States Period. A lodestone in the shape of a ladle swinging freely on a very smooth "Earth-board", its "handle" naturally points south as the bulk of its body points to the magnetic north. A Chinese scholar named Lin Wenzhao points out in an article entitled 'Magnetism and the Compass' that *sinan* was mentioned in many

classics between the Warring states Period and the Tang Dynasty(475 BC to 907 AD). To quote from *The Book of Master Han Fei*: "The great emperors of the past dynasties created *sinan* to determine the four cardinal directions". Then an essay written in the *Book of the Devil Valley Master* written in the 4th century BC, states that when the people of the state of Zheng went far away for quarrying jade they took *sinan* along so as not to lose their bearings (*Ancient China's Technology and Science*, compiled by the Institute of the History of Natural Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Bejing 1983,pp.152-53).

In the middle Spring and Autumn Period, farm implements made of iron had been in use in Chi. These included plough, pick, hoe, spade and sickle. For handicrafts, on the other hand, axe, chopper, saw, awl, chisel and hammer were in use. Iron-tools used by women for their day-to-day work included needle, knife, awl etc. More improvements were made by the people of Yan who used iron moulds to mass-produce farming tools, handicraft tools and spare parts for wagons. The use of iron-tools made possible animal husbandry with the result that both oxen and horses were utilized for agricultural production. No doubt, agricultural productivity increased as a result.

Another important development related to agriculture in the Warring States Period was the construction of water conservancy projects. In fact, for generations, the Chinese people won remarkable successes in their struggle against nature, against Yellow River floods, developing a high level of technique in harnessing it. The present 500 kms of dykes along the banks of the river are the result of their efforts. They were built and improved over the ages. In the Spring and Autumn Period, there were already small dykes along the lower reaches of the Yellow River. By the time of the Warring states Period, the number had increased. On some sections of the river, there appeared what was known as the Great Revetment and Thousand-*Zhang* Dyke(*Zhang* is a Chinese measure of length which in the Warring states Period equaled 2.29 metres). In 486 BC, King Fu Chai of Wu, in an attempt to seek supremacy in the north, constructed the Han canal from Kiangtu to Huai'an, both in modern Kiangsu province so as to connect the Huaihe River with the Changjiang River. Later on, he built up a deeper canal linking the Yishui River in the north with the Jishui River in the west, thereby joining the drainage

of the Huaihe and the Hoangho. This gigantic project was undertaken primarily for transportation. Then Ximen Pao of Wei in the Warring States Period irrigated the farmland of Ye in modern Hopei province with water from the Zhanghe River, turning large tracts of saline-alkaline soil into fertile fields. It demonstrated beyond doubt the knowledge of the people about the vital role that water conservancy projects could play in improving agriculture. One can multiply such instances.

Progress was made also in salt-making, lacquer-ware manufacturing and the casting of bronzes. Sea salt in Chi and Yan, lake city in Anyi of Wei, and well salt in Ba and Shu were well-known. Beginning with the middle of the Warring States Period, musical instruments, weapons, outer coffins, and many utensils of daily use were coated with lacquer. Great attention was given to the cultivation of lacquer trees during the Spring and Autumn period. Portions of a chapter in the *Book of Odes* read as follows: "Small lacquered tables are also used". Exquisite colour-decorated lacquer objects such as tea tablets, desks, *zu*(ancient sacrificial utensils), drums and *se*(a 25-stringed plucked instrument somewhat resembling the zither), dagger-axe handles and tomb-guarding animals of the end of the Spring and Autumn period have been unearthed, providing material data to complement ancient records. Lacquer-tree plantations run by special officials existed in the Warring States Period. In fact, the ancient philosopher Zhuang Zhou(369 BC – 286 BC) is described in the "Biographies of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zhou" in the *Records of the Historian* as having been a lacquer-tree plantation official. Moreover, the artisans of the Warring States Period had some knowledge of the anti-corrosion protective property of paint coat on utensils. The *Artificers' Record* states that lacquer is a substance that can withstand frost and dew.

Besides these, alchemy also made its appearance in ancient China. It was a thaumaturgy for preparing elixirs of life. The origin of Chinese alchemy can be traced back to time immemorial. As recorded in the *Records of the Warring States*, early in that period, the king of the state of Chu was presented with an "elixir of deathlessness" by thaumaturgical technicians. Ancient Chinese alchemy was composed of three distinct fields. First, researches were conducted in subjecting metals and other minerals to proto-chemical processes with the aim

of discovering an elixir of life. Second, researches were made in metallurgical production of artificial gold or silver as "therapeutic" metals. Third, pharmaceutical-botanical researches for macrobiotic plants. It is important to mention that ancient alchemists did not succeed in producing any elixirs of life or genuine gold or silver by transmutation. Nevertheless, they did a large amount of creative work in their own fields, drawing on the experiences of the workers in metallurgy, pharmacy and other handicraft production and in this way helped in the development of many branches of science, particularly Chemistry.

This period was a period marked by important developments in the field of agriculture. Peasants could tell the differences among various types of soil and knew how to transform one type of soil into another. Soil was classified into nine categories and suitable crops were selected for each of them. Manures used were varies in nature starting with animal droppings and extending to wood ashes and green manure. Crop seeds were mixed with animal bones and the mixture was called "fertilized seeds". In the management of crops, the peasants paid attention to the right distance between plants, straight rows, selection of healthy young plants and root protection. The ancient book entitled *Lu's Almanac* and some works contained chapters on agriculture.

Liehkuo was the peak of the Bronze Age. As the techniques of making bronze alloys improved, the production of bronze tools increased. New offensive weapons were introduced. The cross-bow was invented in Ch'u, whose design required the use of high quality bronze. It was also the peak of the might of the chariots as an armed force. At that time, chariot driving was one of the six highest arts of the Chou aristocracy.

Social and Economic Changes:

The Western Chou society was a slave society and the slave mode of production was the dominant mode. In the later period, however, it underwent a transformation and new feudal elements began to make their appearance. Apart from the newly invented farming tools, slaves who had been engaged in collective farming were now replaced as labourers by peasants each working on his own. Independent peasants also replaced those who only till recently did work in communal

villages. The latter part of the Spring and Autumn Period showed definite signs of the decline of slave society; discontent among the oppressed grew and the age was witness to a number of slave rebellions, flight of the slaves to new areas to escape slave-owners' wrath. Thus there was a sharp drop in the number of working hands. This inadequate manpower resulting from this slowdown or the escape of slaves was a matter of much concern to the slave-owners during the late slave society. A poem from Chi in the middle of the Spring and autumn Period states: "Stop ploughing the fields, for wild grass is shooting up". While undertaking a tour of inspection in the state of Chen, an envoy from the Eastern Chou complained that the crops there had all been covered up by weeds. No doubt, land lay in waste in many areas due to shortage of working hands. Under these circumstances, slave-owners were forced to give up the practice of using slave labour, as they came to realize that it was more advantageous to exploit individual peasants.

The earlier practice of distributing land according to its fertility gradually lost its appeal. In the new situation, the peasants themselves could take steps regarding land rotation, since it was no longer necessary to rotate land on a community basis. The special relationship between the peasant and the land that developed as a result gave birth to the concept of the family as a unit of production. Jin was the first state to promote such changes in 645 BC.

In the new period, the individual peasant had two distinct characteristics. On the one hand, he was tied to land, unlike the relationship between slaves and land or between a village commune and land. On the other hand, an individual family became the new productive unit with the husband and the wife both contributing to the production process. This helped increase peasant's dependence on land.

Changes in landownership also began to take place. Throughout the Western Chou period, all the land was under the control of the aristocracy and trade in land was strictly forbidden. In course of time after the middle of the Spring and Autumn Period, some of the land gradually passed from the hands of the aristocracy to the those of individual peasants. During the Warring States Period the sale and purchase of land became very regular, thanks in part to the land reforms carried out by Shang Yang. It was the blooming phase of the

feudal class and the newly emerging class obtained large tracts of land from the princes and their ministers and leased the land to the peasants and collected rent from them in kind.

Along with the change in productive forces, productive relations also underwent changes. The production relations of the previous slave society were not in conformity with the productive forces and so had to be supplanted by new relations of production. The new forces had to enjoy a certain degree of freedom and be engaged in private economy, and not just a tool—'instrumentum vocale'—that could only speak. In place of the slave-owners who treated the slaves as beasts of burden and exploited them as barbarously as they could, now the feudal landowners made the peasants their main targets of attack. However, unlike the slave society, these new exploiters could no longer own the primary producer as completely as the old exploiters did the slaves.

Roughly since the middle of the Spring and Autumn Period and particularly during the Warring States Period, some princes and dukes transformed themselves from slave-owners to landlords. Most of the landlords acquired land through grants as a reward for their military services. Some individual peasants placed in an advantageous position could also become landlords. Different lords occupied different political and social positions and some sort of a feudal social hierarchy developed by degrees in the new society.

As the change over from a slave society to a feudal one was a tortuous process, it was bound to be accompanied by complicated struggles. Class struggle between the exploiters and the exploited and that among the exploiters themselves was no doubt inevitable. In fact, the reforms of Wu Chi and Shang Yang signalled a confrontation with the aristocracy of the old society. The fact that they were killed for their reforms implied the severity of the class struggle. The running away of slaves, the roaming about of "thieves and robbers" and the "fleeing of citizens" in general were all expressions of class struggle. It was one of the most turbulent periods in the history of ancient China. The Chinese historians have recorded the "fleeing of male and female slaves" and the "fleeing of masses" indicating the inability of the slaves and common people to bear the heavy burden of military and labour services imposed them by the ruling classes.

Besides agriculture, industry and commerce during the period under review played, unlike agriculture, an insignificant role in the social economy as a whole. Industry was obviously handicraft industry and people were engaged in various occupations. Products included grain, silk, fibre, textile, ko-hemp cloth, special local products of various regions, and luxury goods used by the ruling classes. Besides artisans, merchants were also there to become economically powerful. As is recorded in contemporary documents, Bai Gui, a merchant of Wei amassed a huge fortune by purchasing grain and selling silk and lacquerware in years of good harvest and by selling grain and buying textile and cotton goods in years of bad harvest. Then Yi Dun of Lu and Diao Jian of Chi minted money by making salt or trading in fish. All of them employed slaves for production. Although feudalism had made its emergence, slavery persisted for a long time in the iron-smelting and salt-manufacturing industries.

Warring States Period and Texts on Military Science and Statecraft:

The Warring States Period had produced two treatises of great importance. One is Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* and the other is *The Book of Shang Yang*. Both are political classics and produced during the time of intense turmoil in Chinese history. And the aim of both was to unite China under one political umbrella. The first is a text on military strategy and tactics and is universally acclaimed as one of the best, if not the best ancient text of its kind anywhere else in the world. The second is on statecraft and deserves comparison with Kautilya's *Arthasastra* and *The Prince* by Machiavelli. Its principal aim is to show how a strong state can be created and maintained against all contenders. Let us discuss them in turn.

The Art of War (Sun-tzu ping fa)

The *Art of War* was the product of a time of intense turmoil in Chinese history. It is the best known text of a considerable body of Chinese texts on the subject. It makes an analysis of the nature of war and shows how victory could be attained. It is, in fact, a serious, urgent and practical response to the desperate conditions prevailing at the time when it was written. Its influence is felt not only in China through the ages, but also outside.

This text is divided into thirteen chapters—the total number of pages being thirty-three. Its importance cannot be assessed by counting the number of pages. Rather, its importance lies in its depth and analysis.

We do not know much about Sun Tzu. The date of its composition is obscure. There is a short biography in Ssu-ma Chien's *Shi Chi* or 'Historical Records'. There Sun Tzu is described as a native of Chi who secured service with Ho-lu, King of Wu and impressed him with his military skill. If this were accurate, then Sun Tzu lived around 500BC towards the end of the Spring and Autumn Period (771BC-481BC). However, there is reason to maintain that these dates are incorrect. First, there is a striking absence of corroborative references to Sun in the appropriate major works of the Spring and Autumn Period. Second, the assumptions concerning war made in *The Art of War* do not reflect the conditions of the earlier times. Whoever wrote this text could assume the existence of large armies with professional officers, which could not have been the case during the Spring and Autumn Period. In the early period, war could not be more than on a small scale–chaotic and amateurish business; on the other hand, the text envisages the war to be a serious, professional business. It is now thought that this text is likely to have been composed during the Warring States Period(403BC-221BC). It bears the imprint of a single mind and the author must have a definite first-hand experience of war.

The Warring States Period has been aptly called so. During that period spanning about two and a half centuries, China as a unified state ceased to exist. Hundreds of states had been fighting one another, of which five states were more powerful than others viz, Chi, Ji, Chin, Chu and Song. The period was one in which more powerful states fought one another for dominance and devoured small territories. The situation was somewhat similar—though on a smaller scale—to India during the 6th century BC in India when, of the Sixteen Mahajanapadas, Kosala and Magadha sought to devour others. The last years of the Spring and Autumn Period and the beginning of the Warring States Period were periods of intense turmoil when autonomous states vied with one another for supremacy. That phase was marked by wars, alliances, counter-alliances, intrigues and counter-intrigues and the campaigns became more and more

protracted. Therefore the nature of the war also changed. War became a desperately serious matter. The size of the armies grew, campaigns became protracted and a class of professional officers emerged who devoted their lives to the successful conduct of war. War thus became the most serious business of the state and the need for a standing army was felt. In the text Sun Tzu sums up the fruit of his experience, and in thirteen chapters he tells us how to win the war. The chapters are as follows: 1) Estimates 2) Waging War 3) Offensive Strategy 4) Dispositions 5) Posture of Army 6) Void and Actuality 7) Manoeuvring 8) Nine Variables 9) On the March 10) Terrain 11) The Nine Varieties of Ground 12) Attack by Fire 13) Use of Spies.

Sun Tzu starts his very brief treatise with the remark that 'War is a matter of vital importance to the state; a matter of life or death, the road either to survival or to ruin'. For the survival of the state, the state needs an efficient, well-commanded army; here the concept and need of a standing army emerges. There is no doubt that Sun's direct experience of war made him one of the greatest of the military strategists of the ancient period.

The first key to success, as he writes, is to deceive the enemy: "All warfare is based on deception. Therefore, when capable of attacking, feign incapacity; when active in moving troops, feign inactivity. When near the enemy, make it seem that you are far away; when far away, make it seem that you are near…"(Chapters1,7). In Chapter 6, page 32 again, he writes: "You must deceive the enemy and must not let him know what you are going to do". The author has emphasized time and again that knowledge or intelligence is of vital importance in times of war. In Chapter 3, p.26, he writes: "When you are ignorant of the enemy but know yourself, your chances of losing or winning are equal. If ignorant both of your enemy and of yourself, you are sure to be defeated in every battle" Then he made the profound observation: "Know thy enemy, know yourself; a hundred battles, a hundred victories". These thoughts have been most influential in China and have been studied and re-studied by all strategists and tacticians not only in China but also in other countries, and utilized as tools of victory.

According to Robert Wilkinson, the influence of Taoism is evident in the language used by Sun Tzu. The business of a general is to be

'serene and inscrutable' (Chapter 11). In Chapter 6, Sun writes about the general moving for battle: "How subtle and inscrutable, that the expert leaves no trace. How divinely mysterious, that he is inaudible. Thus he is the master of his enemy's fate". The use of such a language is non-existent in Claudwitz's work on war or in Kautilya's *Arthasastra*. In Chapter 7, page 34, Sun talks about flexible tactics during war. 'March by an indirect route and divert the enemy by enticing him with a bait'. Mao adopted such tactics many a time, particularly that near the Cheshui River during the Long March(1934-35), as has been described in Han Suyin's *The Morning Deluge*.

In an interesting essay entitled 'The Dialectic in China: Maoist and Taoist' J.W. Freiberg (*Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol.9, No.1, Jan-March 1977) has regarded Sun Tzu as a "Taoist" for three reasons. First, and most superficially, it was long ago incorporated into the Taoist Canon, the 1150 volume set of Taoist works. Second, Sun Tzu, in listing the "factors of war", says that the first principle is to be in accord with the Tao; he thus writes that "Those skilled in war must cultivate the Tao and preserve the laws and are therefore able to formulate victorious policies"(Samuel B. Griffith, *Sun Tzu The Art of War,* London, OUP, 1963, pp.63, 88). But most importantly, and this is the third argument, the logic of the entire book is thoroughly consistent with the Taoist worldview, which was simultaneously being formalized by Lao Tzu at the time this text was being written. Thus Sun Tzu often sounds like Lao Tzu. We quote from Sun Tzu:

"Now an army may be likened to water, for just as flowing water avoids the heights and hastens to the lowlands, so an army avoids strength and strikes weakness".

Now from Lao Tzu:

Under heaven nothing is more soft and yielding than water. Yet for attacking the solid and strong, nothing is better. It has no equal. (Feng Gia-fu and Jane English, *Tao Te-ching of Lao Tzu*, New York, Random House 1972 Ch.78).

The text also suffers from certain limitations. First, the war had been treated in an abstract way—its nature was not explained. In the Warring States Period, big and small states fought one another and devoured one another. War by the big against the small can be

interpreted as unjust and the resistance war by the small against the big as just. There is a 7th-6th century BC text captioned *Zou Zhuan* on slave revolt. Slaves revolted against the raising of the city wall in the Chi state and also against the ruling class in the Zhen state. Were not those slave rebellions just? Sun is silent on these questions. Second, in Chapter 10 on 'Terrain', Sun says: "The general treats them(soldiers) as his own beloved sons". It shows an apparent concern of the leader for his men. However, be betrays a totally different attitude towards his men in Chapter 11 on 'The Nine Varieties of Ground'. The relevant passage is as follows: "The business of a general is to kick away the ladder behind soldiers when they have climbed up a height. He leads the army deep into hostile territory and there releases the trigger. He burns his own boats and smashes his cooking pots; he drives his men now in one direction, then in another, like a shepherd driving a flock of sheep, and no one knows where he is going…"(Page 47). It betrays a disdainful attitude towards his men. Third, Sun's army resorts to repression and terror towards people and non-combatants in the enemy territory. "…when moving, fall like a thunderbolt. *When you plunder the countryside*, divide your forces…" (See Chapter 7 on 'Manoeuvring', page 35).

The *Art of War* also suffers from certain inner contradictions. First, in Chapter 7, he writes in one passage: "leave a way of escape to a surrounded enemy and do not press a desperate enemy too hard"(Page 36). This appears to be somewhat in contradiction with another statement in a previous passage which reads as follows: "…those skilled in war…attack him(the enemy) when it is sluggish and his soldiers homesick"(Page 35). Second, In Chapter 3 captioned 'Offensive Strategy', Sun writes: "The art of using troops is this: When ten to the enemy's one, surround him". This is the typical method of guerrilla warfare, and in Mao's words, 'war of annihilation'. Do not allow the enemy to escape. Such a view is different from Sun's other statement "Leave a way of escape to a surrounded enemy and do not press a desperate enemy". To Mao, such a view is unacceptable. In fact, in a poem he wrote: "With power and to spare, we must pursue the tottering foe…"

Despite limitations, *The Art of War* got universal acclaim as a great text on military science having relevance even after 2500 years.

The Book of Lord Shang (*Shang Chun shu*)/ 'Shang Yang'

From a text whose subject is military science, we now pass on to a text whose subject is political theory/statecraft. In this text, warfare is regarded as one of the principal activities of the state. In this text, Sun Tzu's treatise has been referred to as an authority. 'Shang Yang' is one of the major surviving classics of the ancient Chinese school of philosophy known as Legalism/Legalist School of Thought or the School of Law. It developed in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC in direct response to the political conditions of the time. Let us discuss, however briefly, the historical setting of the period.

As in *The Art of War*, the views expressed in this text were conceived and developed during the Warring States Period. China at that time was not a unified state. The appearance of feudal elements and the decline of the slave society culminated in a situation when China was divided into a number of autonomous smaller states constantly vying with one another for political advantage. It was a period of alliance and counter-alliance, treaties and broken treaties, promises and broken promises and, above all, constant warfare. In the course of the 4th century BC alone, each of some seven feudal lords took the title of king. Therefore, there was no political stability.

There were at that time many serious and urgent questions which called for immediate answers. How to win battles was one such question. And no less important was the question 'how to sustain it'. These issues engaged the attention of rulers and philosophers alike.

During the late Spring and Autumn Period (771BC-475BC) under the Eastern Chou dynasty i.e., late 6th and early 5th centuries BC, as slave society was on the wane, feudal elements had made their emergence and separate feudal domains sprang up in different parts of the country each ruled by a hereditary nobility. There was no feudal empire as such; hence there was no written legal code in the domains; rather the rulers ruled in accordance with customs handed down over the generations—and the peasantry did as they were directed to do by their lords. These customs would inevitably serve the interests of the ruling families and these families claimed exemption from them.

At that time, there were two major issues. One was the political unification of the country. The other was the introduction of a single legal code that would be applicable to all parts of the country. Both were revolutionary in nature and influenced the course of the

development of the history of China. The second problem was addressed during the late Chou period—Warring States Period. The task of political unification was accomplished by Chin Shih-huang-ti, the founder of the Chin dynasty—the first feudal dynasty in 221BC. It was he who put into practice the Legalist programme and established the rule of one single law throughout the realm.

The family name of Shang Yang was Kung-sun Yang. He was born in this political climate probably in the first half of the 4th century BC. He was a political thinker of great personal ambition, dynamism and ruthlessness. Shang believed he knew how to solve the central problems of the time, and he set out doing it with single-mindedness. This is evident from his life story related in Chapter 68 of Ssu-ma Chien's 'Historical Records'.

Shang Yang was a native of the state of Wei. He was an ambitious scholar, but failed to gain any lucrative post under Duke of Wei. So Shang left the state of Wei and went to the state of Chin and gained the favour of Duke Hsiao(ruled 361-338BC). Shang convinced the Duke that the way to consolidate his power and to make Chin victorious over his rivals was to adopt the Legalist programme Shang put forward, and he was given the power to do that.

The essence of the programme is the enactment of a series of laws which are applied uniformly without exception to all the citizens of the state. He convinced Duke Hsiao that it would be to the territorial advantage of Chin to destroy Wei—the state which had failed to recognize Shang's talent—and he was put in charge of the invading forces. The Wei army was thoroughly routed in 341BC. Much of the Wei territory was ceded to Chin and Shang was rewarded with land and with ennoblement as Lord Shang.

However, like all those who rise to power at the expense of others, Shang also had made many enemies. Naturally a time came when his power depended entirely on the protection of Duke Hsiao. So when the duke died in 338BC, his adversaries killed him and his body was torn to pieces by chariots.

Who is the historical author of the text, *Shang Chun-shu*? According to historians, Shang Yang was not likely to have been the author of the text, although it is more than possible that parts of the text composed first do reflect his ideas. The consensus of modern scholars is that 'The Book of Lord Shang' is a compilation of Legalist

writings, probably put together gradually over a period of 100 years and complete by the 3rd century BC. This, according to Robert Wilkinson, is based on two considerations. First, marked stylistic differences are evident in different parts of the text. Second, changes in content are there in the text; there are inconsistencies. Some sections (notably the last, no.26 captioned 'Fixing of Rights and duties') are more sophisticated than those composed earlier. It appears that the later sections embody the fruit of the experience of applying the Legalist doctrines in practice.

The Book of Lord Shang and Kautilya's *Arthasastra* compared

'The Book of Lord Shang' is a treatise on statecraft, on government. It is neither meant for the people, nor for ministers, nor officials, but for the ruler alone. Its central purpose is to show the ruler how to succeed: to succeed in ensuring that his state is victorious over others and that his powers are never threatened by any other element in the state. The goal of political activity is the conquest of the whole empire and the book gives a blueprint showing how to achieve that objective.

This text has often been compared with Machiavelli's *The Prince*. But there is a gap of nearly two thousand years between the Warring States Period in ancient China and early modern Italy when *The Prince* was composed. A more interesting comparison can be made with Kautilya's *Arthasastra*. They belong to the same historical period, although the years of their composition are still obscure. If we make a comparison, then there are both similarities and dissimilarities.

First, both the texts were composed during the same historical period, i.e, 4th century BC, although we do not know exactly when. Chandragupta Maurya ascended the throne in 321BC. Was *Arthasastra* completed by then by Kautilya, or later? We do not know. Whatever the exact year, it would be closer to 321BC, as the Maurya state was known as the 'Arthasastra State'. On the other hand, Shang Yang died in 338BC; so the ideas about the text must have been fairly well-known by then.

Second, Kautilya, beyond doubt, was the author of the ancient Indian treatise on Statecraft. But Shang Yang might not have been the author of the ancient Chinese text. If we are to believe the scholars, then this text is the collective product of Legalist thinking, although it did reflect Lord Shang's ideas.

Third, although both the texts were written more or less in the same historical period, the situation in one country differed from that in the other. The Chinese treatise was written at a time when China was disunited and each state was fighting against the other. In India, on the contrary, Magadhan rule—even under the Nandas—was quite powerful and many parts of the sub-continent had been conquered by the Nanda rulers. The problem before Kautilya—the Brahmin minister of Chandragupta Maurya or Chandragupta was not particularly to unite a disunited country, many parts of which were at war with one another, but to consolidate an already established empire by subduing new territories and thereby bringing about the political unification of the whole country. The Indian situation in the 6th century BC—when the sixteen small and large principalities or 'Mahajanapadas' vied with one another for supremacy and existence was totally different from 4th century BC when Magadha had already established herself as the all-powerful universal monarchy. Similarly, the situation in China in the 4th century BC was different from that in the late 3rd century BC when the Chin rulers established the first unified feudal empire.

Fourth, 'The Book of Lord Shang' comprised of twenty-nine chapters/sections, of which four sections are lost. 'Arthasastra' consisted of eleven chapters/sections, of which portions have been lost from almost all sections (particularly from that on War) at the time of recopying (as DD Kosambi informs us); but unlike the Chinese text, no one section is totally lost.

Fifth, 'Arthasastra'—far larger in volume—is of nearly 650 pages. 'The Book of Shang Yang', on the other hand, is of 95 pages excluding chapters 21, 27, 28 and 29 which are totally lost. The former has eleven chapters which are as follows: 1) Introductory Sections; 2) The State and its constituent elements; 3) The king; 4) The Well-organized State; 5) Treasury, Sources of Revenue, Accounts & Audit; 6) Civil Service Regulations; 7) The Departments of the Government; 8) Law and Justice; 9) Covert operations; 10) Foreign Policy; 11) Defence and War.

The latter consists of twenty-nine chapters of which chapters 21, 27, 28 and 29 are totally lost. These chapters are grouped into five sections as follows: Section A: 1) The reform of the Law; 2) An order to cultivate the waste lands; 3) Agriculture and War; 4) The

elimination of strength. Section B: 5) Discussion about the People; 6) The Calculation of Land; 7) Opening and Debarring. Section C: 8) The Unification of Words; 9) Establishing Laws; 10) The Method of Warfare; 11) The Establishment of Fundamentals; 12) Military Defence; 13) Making Orders strict; 14) The Cultivation of the Right standard. Section D: 15) The Encouragement of Immigration; 16) Compendium of Penalties(Lost); 17) Rewards and Punishments; 18) Policies. Section E: 19) Within the Borders; 20) Weakening the People; 21) Lost; 22) External and Internal affairs; 23) Prince and Minister; 24) Interdicts and encouragements; 25) Attention to Law; 26) The fixing of Rights and Duties; 27) Lost; 28) Lost; 29) Lost.

If one makes a comparison between the two treatises, one will get the following impression. First, the *Arthasastra* gives the impression of a State that has already become well-established. It has a detailed description of the standing army, infantry, elephants, chariots, bureaucracy, spies etc. *Shang Yang*, on the other hand, deals with a situation where a powerful state was yet to be born. It was disunity and fighting all around.

Second, *Shang Yang* caters to the needs of the rising feudal forces. The *Arthasastra* State on the other hand, was not at all a feudal state; feudalism emerged in India much later during the late Gupta period i.e, 4^{th} -5^{th} centuries AD.

Third, *Shang Yang* was concerned primarily with the establishment of a uniform legal system that had been lacking in China at that time. The Arthasastra State, on the other hand, was not faced with any such pressing need. It dealt with state policy, justice and other things.

Fourth, if one goes through sections such as Defence and War in the Indian text, one will notice that it dealt with positional warfare, not guerrilla warfare. That is quite natural. Neither *Shang Yang* nor *The Art of War* could afford to carry on any positional warfare, for the very simple reason that a unified state had to be born first, consolidated first and, it is only after that that it could afford to go for positional warfare.

Fifthly, in both the Indian and the Chinese texts, there is a stress on the cultivation of waste lands. Some relevant portions from the Chinese text are as follows:

"If there is no procrastination in the creating of order, depraved officials have no opportunity of gaining private profits at the expense

of the people, nor will the hundred officials be in a condition to temporize and shift responsibilities on to one another. If the hundred officials are not in a condition to temporize and shift responsibilities on to one another, then agriculture will know days of surplus; and if the depraved officials have no opportunity of gaining private profits at the expense of the people, then agriculture will not be ruined. If agriculture is not ruined, but knows days of surplus, then it is certain waste lands will be brought under cultivation" (See Chapter 2 captioned 'An Order to cultivate Waste lands').

The same chapter deals with the taxes. It states: "If taxes are levied according to the measure of grain, then the ruler will have system and consequently the people will have peace". Here the blueprint of a system is being proposed. In the Arthasastra State, the system had already been there; taxes in *rastra* lands being 1/6th and those in *sita* land being 1/4th of the produce.

Sixthly, in the Chinese text, there is a chapter on "The Calculation of Land'. Portions of it are as follows: "If the population exceeds the territory, then the achievements of the state will be few and the military strength small; if the territory exceeds the population, then the resources of mountains and moors will not be utilized...So in administering a state, the correct ruler of the former kings", according to *Shang Yang*, "was to populate cities, town and highways with a tenth of the people, barren fields with one tenth and fertile lands with four-tenths of the people". The Indian text, on the other hand, advocates the settlement of virgin, new lands by people living in the overcrowded slums, the basic administrative units being villages of 10, 50, 100, 200 and so on.

Seventhly, in the chapter entitled 'The Methods of Warfare' Lord Shang states: "When hostilities begin, weigh the strength of the enemy; if your organization is not equal to his, do not engage him in battle; if your provisions are not equal to his, do not protract the war; if the enemy is numerically strong, do not invade his territory; if the enemy is in every way your inferior, attack him without hesitation..." Undoubtedly, here the author draws a lot from Sun Tzu. But there is no such thing in Kautilya's text which deals with positional warfare.

The Art of War is regarded as an authority on the strategy and tactics to be adopted during warfare. *The Book of Shang Yang* is regarded as a text of political theory in which warfare is regarded as

one of the principal activities of the state. In this book, *The Art of War* is mentioned as an authority. In this sense both the treatises are complementary to each other. A philosophical school known as Legalism or the School of Law developed during the 4th and 3rd centuries BC in direct response to the political conditions of the time. *The Book of Lord Shang* or *The Book of Shang Yang* is one of the major surviving classics of the ancient Chinese school of philosophy known as Legalism. Shang Yang was born probably in the first half of the 4th century BC. and definitely junior to Sun Tzu. He was executed in the kingdom of Ch'in in 338 BC. The text was written at least more than one hundred years before Kautilya wrote his *Arthasastra*. According to Ssu-ma Ch'ien's *Historical Records*, Shang Yang believed he knew how to solve the central political problems of his time and set out doing so with all ruthlessness and single-mindedness. The central theme in his programme is the institution of a corpus of law which would have a universal application without exception to all the citizens of the state. Shang Yang enjoyed exceptional powers so much so that when the Crown Prince of Ch'in broke the new laws, punishment was meted out to him.

Robert Wilkinson, in his introduction to the text, maintains that Shang Yang was unlikely to be the historical author of the text which bears his name, though parts of the text composed might definitely reflect his ideas. Recently, scholars have arrived at a consensus that the text is a compilation of Legalist writings, probably put together over a period of one hundred years and complete by the third century BC. This case is somewhat similar to the cases of Confucius and the Buddha. Confucius wrote only one book, known as *Annals of the State of Lu* and all other works which bear his name are compilation of his sayings and speeches made to his disciples from time to time along with annotations by his students. Likewise, the Buddha himself did not write down anything. What he preached were compiled by his disciples long time after his death and came to be known as *Tripitakas* or the "three baskets".

Shang Yang through his teachings made an attack on the Confucian school of thought. In fact, the belief that the law must be the unique source of values in the state entails the legalist attack particularly on the Confucian school of thought. The elements of the Confucian ethical and cultural programme are regarded as parasites:

'rites and music, odes and history, moral culture and virtue, filial piety, love...chastity...benevolence...". More about it will be discussed in the section on culture that follows.

Ideology and Culture:

The Eastern Chou period witnessed great advances in the division of labour and extended the gulf between mental and manual labour. It gave rise to philosophy in the proper sense of the term. It was the period of the Hundred Schools of Thought when learned men and politicians moved from one state to another to get a hearing from the rulers and, if fortune favoured them, become part of the court mandarins and acted as advisors to them. The emergence of this "spiritual elite" was itself the indication of the profound changes in the superstructure. The principal ideological trends of ancient China—Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism and Mohism—emerged in that historical period.

Confucianism evolved in the late 6th and early 5th centuries. According to this doctrine, each person has to occupy a strictly determined place in the immutable social and world structure. It demanded strict discipline and subordination within a rigid social hierarchy: the son obeys the father, the father obeys his superior and so on even to the ruler and supreme head of state, the Chou Son of Heaven "Chou Rites" are fixed by the Heaven and unalterable. These questions have been dealt with in the chapter on Confucius and Confucianism, so we are going into them any further at present.

Unlike Confucianism, which was metaphysical in spirit, the thinking of the Taoists was dialectical. It was founded by Lao Tze from the state of Ch'u. An elder contemporary of Confucius, Lao Tze is said to be the author of the philosophical treatise *Taoteching*. The basic tenet of this doctrine was Tao or "the way". They advocated a return to primitive simplicity and equality within the community. The Taoists recognized the eternal quality of Tao interpreted as nature, the objective reality of the world, and rejected the deification of Heaven and the Will of Heaven and believed heaven to be as much part of nature as earth.

The other school of thought was Mohism founded by Mo Ti or Mo tzu founded in the 5th-4th centuries. The followers of this school took up positions somewhat between those of the Confucianists and

the Taoists. The Mohists recognized the divine Will of Heaven interpreting it as the human carrier of the principles of the doctrine. Unlike the Confucianists, they argued that the Will of Heaven was cognizable and that man's fate was not predetermined, but depended on him alone. They rejected both the Confucian view of innate a-priori knowledge and Taoist speculative cognition. Mo Ti also emphasized the importance of manual labour and believed it to be obligatory for all people without exception. The Mohists were also without equal in the art of debate. The other important school of thought was the Legalist school. They believed in one single law and that precisely is the reason why they were called so. Their philosophy no doubt helped in the feudal unification of China under the Chin dynasty. We will deal with these philosophical schools of thought in detail in the next chapter.

The latter part of the Warring States Period witnessed remarkable achievement in the branches of art and literature. In fact, the first poetic works by individual authors appeared at that time. The great Ch'u Yuan (340-278 BC) who lived and worked in the state of Ch'u is generally regarded as the first Chinese poet. The *Elegies of Chu* is a collection of poetic verses and songs written in the local dialect and tone of Chu. It was endowed with strong regional characteristics and a unique style. His lyrical and tragic poems enjoyed much appeal for their exquisite elegance of form and content, and their wealth of picturesque mythological images. Ch'u Yuan appealed for the unification of all kingdoms against the Ch'in state—the enemy of his own state. Political misfortunes led to his exile and while in exile, he composed his famous poem *Encountering Sorrow*. According to tradition, the poet drowned himself on learning of the victory of the Ch'in state over Ch'u. It is said that Ch'u Yuan's works formed the basis of the new song genre of *fu*-lyrical and lyrico-epic odes with prosaic introductions. When the Chinese historians say that Ch'u was the first Chinese poet, they do not mean that such statement be taken literally. There were poets before him, but they were anonymous. Ch'u Yuan's works exerted tremendous influence on the development of Chinese literature.

Another important Ch'u poet, Sung Yu(290-223 BC) also wrote in the elegiac genre and developed the ode form. Sung Yu's poems marked a clear departure from those of Ch'u Yuan. Unlike the

pessimistic poetry of Ch'u Yuan, Sung Yu's lyrics were full of the joy of life. He is regarded as the first Chinese poet who sang the praises of love and female beauty. It is said that Sung Yu's poetry laid the beginning of secular poetry in China.

Chapter : 7

Hundred Schools of Thought: Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism, Legalism

'Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend', so said Mao Tse-tung during the period of socialist reconstruction in China after the revolution. When he said this, he, in fact, was referring to a period long gone by. It was the Spring and Autumn Period (771 BC-475 BC) during the reign of the Chou Dynasty. The Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period (475 BC-221 BC) that followed it, were periods both of tremendous socio-political turmoil as also of great cultural blossoming, the age of many scholars and the Hundred Schools of Thought. Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism and Legalism were the most well-known of those schools of thought. It is to these that we now turn.

Confucianism

All of us are familiar with the terms 'scholar-officials', 'scholar-gentry', 'scholars' etc. in connection with the history of China. The Chinese scholars throughout history had spent most of their lives studying and re-studying Confucian classics. They also annotated and re-annotated those classics. All of them were very proud of their heritage as the highest culture in the world. There were some among them who had the wealth and leisure to study for years until they passed a series of Imperial examinations and became officials. These officials then utilized their administrative position to amass wealth and power. They wrote the dynastic histories of the emperors or rulers, they interpreted philosophical meanings to the rulers and in this way acted as their political advisors. They acquired landed wealth, maintained the bureaucracy and ruled and oppressed the people. They were known as the 'scholar-gentry-officials' who were tools of the rulers from one dynasty to another.

It was during the Han times that Confucianism became the official doctrine of the ruling state and it was Han Kan Tsu, the first Han emperor, who in 195 BC, offered important sacrifices at the Khung family temple in honour of Confucius. Later, in 59 AD, the Emperor Han Ming Ti ordered sacrifices to him in every school in the country, thus taking the worship of Confucius away from the Khung family and out of the state. Thus Confucius was transformed from a model for scholars into the patron saint of the scholar-officials. In this way for about 24 centuries, Confucian doctrines had been the theoretical basis for the unity and continuity of China and her culture.

The Confucian school is known as *ju*. The Chinese character *ju* originally referred to those who helped he slave-owning aristocrats make arrangements for ceremonies and rituals such as a funeral service. Confucius himself was in this profession in the early years; later he ran a private school to give lectures propagating the thinking of returning to the old order, engaged in political activities opposing changes and tried in many ways to save the tottering slave system. Gradually a school of thought was being formed, known as the Confucian(*ju*) school. Its reactionary doctrines were taken over and developed by Mencius in the Warring States Period. Thus the Confucian school was also known as the Confucian-Mencian school and their doctrines known as the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. After the Western Han Dynasty, all those who inherited and elaborated the thinking of Confucius and Mencius were generally referred to as Confucianists. And the influence was felt to a large extent even in the 20th century.

The question is: why is Confucianism so powerful and lasting? To answer this question, it is necessary to state briefly the historical setting of the period of Confucius.

Confucius belonged to the period of the Chou dynasty. The dominant political structure of the Chou dynasty was fiefdom. Most of the official posts were held together by nobles by hereditary right; the fiefs were also hereditary. After the Chou conquest, a large number of the Shang people and their slaves became slaves of the new rulers. Ancient records state that King Wu attacked 99 states, taking prisoner large numbers of people who possibly became slaves. Convicts were another source of slaves. The common people who had revolted against the nobles were converted into slaves and forced to perform

all sorts of labour. Bronze inscriptions record the grants by the Chou kings and nobles of tens, hundreds or thousands of slave families. According to one inscription, five slaves were worth a horse and a bundle of silk. In the bronze inscriptions there are many examples of slaves being forced to perform productive labour—mostly farming and in some cases handicraft work.

The royal house was nominally the owner of all land, and the land was called "public domain". The land system that was in vogue in those times was known as *ching tien*. Every piece of land was divided into nine squares in the shape of the Chinese character *ching* and parceled out. The supreme ruler distributed the "public domain" to the slave-owners for their use according to their rank. This "public domain" was thus sliced up into portions of land, and each of these portions was called a 'fief'. The land system was one of ownership by the slave-owning nobility. The land system that was in vogue in those times was known as *ching tien*.

Together with this social structure there arose an enormous and complex code of rites, known as *Chou Rites*. These rites governed the states, their rulers, their rights, duties and privileges, from the highest to the lowest in the hierarchy. These Chou Rites were regarded as unalterable principles like those that govern and regulate the movements of heavenly bodies.

Confucius was born in 551 BC in the town of Tsou, in the county of Ch'angping in the Shantung province of China, then a part of the state of Lu. He traced his descent from the Imperial house of Shang. The state of Lu was noted for its preservation of the traditions of ritual and music of the Chou civilization. Confucius is the latinized name of Chhiu Khung. He was a contemporary of the Buddha (563 BC-483 BC). His ancestors used to be slave-owners. His ancestors were big aristocrats in the State of Sung(the Shangchiu area in eastern Honan province today) and his forefathers later moved to the State of Lu(the present-day southwestern part of Shantung province). After his father Tsou Shu Ho died, the family declined further. Having received the education of the slave-owning class in his boyhood days, he took the road of defending and restoring the slave system from his youth. The decadence of his class and the decline of his family made him fight to restore the lost "paradise" stubbornly. His life-long dream of restoration was to "revive states that were extinct,

restore families that had lost their positions, and call to office those who had fallen into obscurity".

During his youth, Confucius was for a time a low-ranking official managing warehouses; then he tended sheep and oxen. His mastery over the six arts—ritual, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy and arithmetic—and his familiarity with the classical traditions, notably poetry and history, enabled him to start a teaching career in his thirties. For the most part of his life, Confucius was a private teacher. The rulers of different states received him courteously and consulted him. It was during the time of the Han dynasty that Confucianism became the official doctrine of the bureaucratic society, and it was Han Kao Tsu, the first Han emperor, who in 195 B.C. offered important sacrifices at the Khung family temple in honour of Confucius.

It is pertinent to point out that born and reared in an aristocratic family, Confucius never questioned the nature of that society, but fully supported it. In fact, he developed it by formulating theories on various aspects of the nature of man and of the outside world. Towards the end of the *Spring and Autumn Period (771-475 BC)*, the slave-owning class declined; there was growing unrest which led to uprisings by the slaves. Big states conquered small states and the total number of the states was reduced from 1800 to 100. By the beginning of the *Warring States Period (475-221 BC)*, there was a more advanced mode of production—the feudal mode, giving rise to economic progress and a new social class—the feudal class—emerged. Men of this emerging class took possession of land and naturally sought to gain political power at the expense of the slave-owning class. In the eyes of Confucius, such deeds were violations of the sacred Chou Rites and created social chaos. He talked about 'return to the rites', i.e., the Chou Rites. By this, he wanted to let the overthrown slave-owning aristocrats return to power.

Both the Spring and Autumn and Warring States were periods of tremendous turmoil. At the same time, they were also ages of great cultural blossoming, the age of many scholars and the Hundred Schools of Thought. Members of the elite, the intelligentsia, the literati wrote, debated among themselves, travelled to many places to propagate their theories in order to get a hearing from the rulers of states and, if successful, to get employment. Confucius was one of

those scholars. What made Confucianism so important in history was his inner conservatism, which always supported the status quo.

The Chinese Marxist scholars argue that during his life time, Confucius supported the rulers of the declining slave society. Joseph Needham has drawn our attention to some aspects in Confucius' life which throw some light on this aspect. First, Confucius is said to have successfully saved his prince from an ambush of ritual Pyrrhic dancers at an interview with the Duke of Chhi. Secondly, he tried to dismantle certain fortifications in Lu so as to reduce the power of the three great noble families who were maintaining a kind of 'shugunate'. This ultimately led to his exile. It is quite significant that on two occasions, Confucius was given a position of authority by commanders who rebelled against their feudal superiors and the feudal system and fought for the idea of bureaucratic monarchy.

Although Confucius became the founder of a school of thought, he did not himself compose any doctrinal works except one, i.e., *Annals of the State of Lu.* A book that contains his sayings and conversations is *Analects*. This was the joint production of some of his chief disciples, like the Buddhist *Tri-Pitakas*. The *Analects* is regarded as Confucian Bible, being a miscellaneous, unclassified and unedited collection of the remarks of Confucius on various occasions, mostly without any reference to the circumstances in which the remarks were made and torn from the context. These teachings were compiled and amplified by others in two other treatises. One was *The Great Learning /The Higher Education* (*Tahsuch*). According to Ch'eng Yich'uan, the Sung Confucianist, "This *Tahsuch* is a book in the surviving tradition of the Confucian school and constitutes the gateway through which beginners enter into the path of virtue". The other was the *Doctrine of the Mean/The Golden Mean (Chungyung)*. This treatise is important for understanding Confucian philosophy. These were the **Four Books** which century after century every Chinese schoolboy had to recite. He, however, edited some literary works such as *Book of History, Book of Odes, Book of Changes, Spring and Autumn Annals, Book of Rites* and the *Book of Music*.

In Confucius' opinion, heaven, earth and man were one unified and harmonious whole, preordained by heavenly principles. Everything on earth, including the status of human beings, was

decided by Heaven. As to the question how to govern a state and rule the people, he said that the essential requisite was to revive and adopt the principles and practices, laws and regulations of kings in ancient dynasties. He opposed the rising class of landowners and violently hated the slave uprisings. He devoted his whole attention to 'restrain oneself and return to the Rites'. In fact, the rule of "rites" was a political idea of the Confucian school. It stressed absolute observance of the hierarchy, rituals and ceremonies under the slave system of the Western Chou Dynasty, strict distinction between the social position of the slave-owner and the slave and absolute obedience by the slave to the slave-owner. The slave-owning aristocrats at all levels had to be content with their rank and title and not overstep the limits set by them.

To all questions Confucius gave different answers, to suit the questioner. When students asked how to govern a state and rule the people, he said the essential requisite was to revive and adopt the principles and practices, laws and regulations, music and sacrificial ceremonies of kings in ancient dynasties, such as the calendars and seasonal observances of the Hsia period, the chariots which distinguished rank and status in Shang times, and the costumes of the Chou dynasty. This may be summed up as the revival and practice of the Chou Rites.

Bai Shouyi and some other Chinese scholars hold that Confucianism was to some extent reformist in nature. He proposed that good and capable people should be appointed to official posts, a proposal that was contrary to the prevailing practice of hereditary rule It has often been said that no qualifications of birth were necessary in acceptance for the administrative and diplomatic training which Confucius gave. In this Needham notices the germs of the bureaucratic system, according to which whoever was teachable and ambitious for letters could become a scholar and serve his prince and later the state as an official, so matter what the social position of his family might have been. However, the point is that even if it is theoretically accepted that social status is irrelevant here, any person aspiring for study and administrative power must have the money and leisure to do so. So only the members of the nobility could have access to it. Although he advocated the elevation of good and capable people, he never raised objection to the official hereditary system

and even advised capable men to be satisfied with their poverty and lowly position.

He stressed the importance of benevolence and regarded it as the highest ideal of morality. Yet, according to him, benevolence meant different grades of love—more love for those who were close and less for those who were distant, more for the highly placed and less for the lowly. On the one hand, he emphasized that rites should be combined with benevolence. On the other, he held that benevolence should be practised within the strict boundary of rites, i.e., Chou rites. Bai Shouyi holds that while aspiring to be a statesman, he defended the interests of the slave-owning nobles without being able to break through the shackles of the old order.

It is pertinent to point out that Confucius himself was witness to a big slave uprising that took place at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period. That rising was led by Liuhsia Chih whose family name was Chan. He was known as Liuhsia Chih because he lived at a place called 'Liuhsia'. His deeds against Confucius and his revolutionary activities were recorded in an essay entitled "Chih the Robber' in the *Chuang Tzu*, an ancient Chinese work of the Taoist school mainly containing the writings of the idealist philosopher Chuang Chou(369-286BC). It is known from the book that Chih "led nine thousand followers, fighting in many places and attacking the slave-owning aristocrats". Whenever they went, the slave-owning aristocrats fled in a hurry, the big aristocrats were entrenched in walled cities and the small nobles hid themselves in citadels surrounded by earthen walls and never dared to resist. Hsun Tzu(313-238BC), a thinker of the new emerging landlord class and an outstanding representative of the Legalist school, acknowledged that Liuhsia Chih was adept at convincing people in debates and enjoyed high prestige among the down-trodden people. He also said that Chih's name was like the sun and the moon and would continuously be passed on as those of the famous ancient rulers. Some later progressive thinkers also called him the "brightest" sage of the common people in revolt(Tang Hsiao-wen, 'Liuhsia Chih denounces Confucius', *Peking Review* No.25, June 21, 1974).

Confucius tried to dissuade him from making revolts and offending the upper orders. Chih Chan criticized Confucian idea of "benevolence". He started with filial piety and brotherly love that

were the fundamentals of "benevolence". He cited facts to show that the ruling slave-owning aristocrats were "unkind to their children", "had no filial piety", were "sots", "banished and killed people at will" and were "conspirators". He also denounced Confucius' filial piety as false talk and brotherly love as sheer lies to befool the people (See Tien Kai, 'Working People's Struggle against Confucius in Chinese History', *Peking Review* No.13, March 29, 1974, p11).

Confucius made it clear that scholars should study in order become officials. True to this teaching, Confucius and some students travelled far and wide, from one feudal state to another, trying to gain a hearing from their prices, to convince them of his theories of government. Did Confucius ever hold any official position? Creel holds that he might have held a nominal advisory post in the state of Lu at the turn of the century. Dubs and some others, on the other hand, accept the tradition that he was at first a minor administrator in charge of granaries and then of public lands, while later, after an absence in Chhi state, he became Minister of Justice and Chancellor for one short while about 501 BC in his own state of Lu, in the southern half of the modern Shantung province.

Needham writes that Confucian teaching contained the democratic idea that the prince and later the emperor derived their power primarily from the will of the people, expressing Heaven's will or mandate. This idea was developed later by Mencius He writes: "Thus that 'right of rebellion against unchristian princes' which so exercised the minds of the +16th and +17th century theologians of the Europe had already been laid down two thousand years before by the Confucian school". This democratic or revolutionary idea, in Needham's opinion again, was combined with the desire to uphold the established order. This "was perhaps one of the factors which permitted the Confucian bureaucracy of subsequent ages to rise superior to every change of dynasty by espousing popular causes and then presenting itself to each new ruler as the only possible instrument whereby government could be carried on. But the democratic element was real".

Confucius' students numbered some 3000; of them 72 were close to him. The principles of his system were to train men to be excellent in writing, well in conduct, loyal to their masters (emperors, feudal lords), and fair dealing with equals. The overriding aim was to train

a man well versed in the classics, but disciplined in the *Rites* so that he would not deviate from the true path, i.e., would not rebel.

'Studying to become official' was the main aim of Confucian learning. Those who studied had to sit for imperial examinations, and after passing those examinations they could get entry into imperial service. However, the whole process required decades of concentrated study of the classics of all periods. It is quite obvious that only those with leisure and money could afford to study. That implies that the overwhelming majority of the people of China were debarred from entering the gate to the long avenues of arduous learning. In fact, this tiny minority of scholars, pale-faced, long finger-nailed, long gowned, monopolized learning and the ruling bureaucracy at all levels from the imperial ministers right down to village level for almost 24 centuries.

Let us now refer to some selected passages from the *Analects*, and see what those actually imply. Confucius said: "Benevolence means to restrain oneself and return to the rites. Once self-restraint and return to the rites are achieved, all under heaven will submit to the benevolent ruler". Here "rites" refer to the hierarchy and its related rites and ceremonies under the slave system of the Western Chou dynasty. "restraining oneself and returning to the rites" was, in fact, the reactionary programme of Confucius for restoring the Western Chou system. In fact, towards the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, the flame of peasant risings were spreading to many places and the newly-rising landlord class was struggling to take over power from the slave-owning aristocracy. Faced with the situation of "the rites being lost and music ruined", Confucius upheld the interests of the slave-owning aristocrats and waved the banner of "restraining oneself and returning to the rites". What he sought was to "revive states that were extinct, restore families that had lost their positions, and call to office those who had fallen into obscurity". He aimed at reviving the extinct states of the slave system, resuming the hereditary privileges of the slave-owning aristocrats return to power so as to restore the dictatorship of the slave-owning class.

In eulogizing the rule of the "Rites", Confucius, according to a Chinese Workers' Study Group, was simply using the preaching of benevolence, righteousness and virtue to cover up the cruel dictatorship of the slave-owners. When the rulers of Chi and Lu (two

ducal states in the Spring and Autumn Period, Lu being in the southern part of present-day Shantung province and Chi in the northern part) attended a meeting of friendship in Chiaku, the slaves were directed to entertain them with music and dancing. In Confucius' opinion, their music and dancing violated the rites of the Western Chou Dynasty and so the slaves should be put to death. So the slaves were executed there and then. Then less than three months after he became acting prime minister of the state of Lu, Confucius killed the reformer Shaocheng Mou in 498 BC. (*Peking Review*, No.16, April 18, 1975).

During his lifetime, new feudal forces had been emerging within the bosom of the slave society. Confucius was opposed to any change made by the newly emerging social landlord class to the existing economic base and superstructure. When his disciple Jan Chiu helped the House of Chisun, which held the rank of *ta fu*(senior official) in the State of Lu, adopt the land tax system that promoted the development of the feudal relations of production, Confucius urged his other disciples to "beat the drum and set upon him". It is pertinent to point out that representatives of the new emerging landlord class in the State of Tsin cast in 513BC an iron tripod inscribed with the laws, which in fact set some restrictions on the slave-owners, and thus made them known to the public, Confucius firmly opposed this and cursed that Tsin would "be doomed". When he heard that the new emerging landlord class in the State of Chi killed Duke Chien, the state's slave-owner chieftain, and seized power, Confucius was 71 and confined to bed because of a serious illness. Still he made a desperate effort to get out of bed and asked the ruler of the State of Lu, repeatedly asking him to send a punitive force('Confucius the Man' by the Mass Criticism Group of Peking and Tsinghua Universities, in *Peking Review*, No.27, July 5, 1974).

As Confucius was a firm believer in status quo, he had always been against innovations. As he stated: "I pass on what is ancient and do not create anything new. I have firm confidence in and love the ancient things". As Confucius saw it, all the old things were perfect and even the slightest changes should be prohibited. In the 1970s, particularly during the period of anti-Lin Piao ideological struggles of 1974-75, the Chinese scholars' and workers' study groups assailed Confucius. In fact, he advocated that people should follow the calendar of the Hsia Dynasty, ride in carts built in the style of the

Yin(Chou) Dynasty, wear hats in the fashion of the Chou Dynasty times and play music dating back to the times of Yu Shun(legendary leader of a tribal alliance in the primitive times more than 4000 years ago).(See: " Criticism of Selected Passages from 'Analects'—a Confucian 'Classic' by the Workers' theoretical study group of the No.2 workshop of the Shanghai No.5 Steel Plant).

In Confucius' writings there is a clear line of demarcation between the superior and the inferior, between the high and the low, between mental labour and physical labour. One of his students, Fan Chi asked his master about learning to grow grain, but the master said that he was not a farmer; asked about how to grow vegetables, he said he was not a market gardener. When Fan Chi went out Confucius said to some other students: 'What a small man, poor Fan Chi!'

The most important follower of Confucius was Mencius (372-289 BC), who was a student of his grandson. Mencius was the latinized name of Meng Kho/Meng Tzu. He was born in State of Tsou on the southern borders of Lu and spent most of his life teaching in Liang and Chhi and advising their rulers. There was nothing essentially new in his doctrines. He developed the concept that that the goodwill of the people was essential in government and stressed the famous saying in the *Shu Ching* that Heaven sees according as the People see, Heaven hears according as the People hear. Like Confucius, he also divided human beings into two main classes, the superior and the inferior; while the former was knowledgeable and wise, the latter was stupid, and this was also unalterable. One can cite a few quotations to show this class division:

One who does not know the mandate of heaven cannot be a superior man. One who does not know the rites cannot stand up as a man.

"The superior man fears heaven, important people and the words of sages; the inferior man does not understand the mandate of heaven, is disrespectful towards important people and insults the words of sages.

"The superior man thinks of virtue; the inferior man thinks about the soil; the superior man is diligent in governing (the state); the inferior man exerts his physical strength. Those who work with their minds govern; those who work with their hands are governed.

"Women and inferior people are hard to nurture; they are hard to

get along with; they get out of hand when befriended, and resent it when kept at a distance".

The "will of heaven", "great men" and "words of the sages" mentioned by Confucius are in fact the religious authority, political authority and ruling ideology of the slave society. It appears that he tried to scare people with these three things and compel them to submit to the rule of the slave-owners forever. He attacked the "inferior men" for not fearing these things. There is no doubt that the slaves and Legalists had no fear of the will of heaven, they wanted to uproot the political power of the slave-owning class and they wanted to criticize the words of sages. What they did was to rise in rebellion against the existing society.

Some ideas are quite clear from these statements. First, society is divided into classes—between the superior people and the inferior people. Second, it also shows that the difference between mental labour and physical labour was particularly sharp in those times. This difference, incidentally, is one of the 'three great differences' which, in Marx's opinion, emerged in course of the emergence of class society. Third, women were also treated as inferior people.

Later Confucians such as Tung Chung-shu(179-104 BC) formulated more codes of conduct for women. He formulated the "three cardinal guides" and the "five constant virtues". The "three cardinal guides" mean that the sovereign guides the ministers, the father guides the sons and the husband guides the wife. That is to say, the sovereign, father and husband have the absolute power to rule, while the ministers, sons and wife should obey absolutely. The "five constant virtues" refer to the so-called five unchangeable principles, namely, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and sincerity—the moral principles which the Confucianists used to maintain and adjust the relations between the "three cardinal guides". The rulers of China inherited the legacy of Confucius and formulated the "three obedience" and "four virtues". The obedience required that a woman must obey the father when young, obey the husband when married, and obey sons when widowed. The "four virtues" were: A woman should possess the feudal moral ethics: her speech should conform to the feudal ethical code: her clothing should suit feudal customs: and she should be able to do household chores and wait on parents-in-law, husband and sons. In fact, there was a saying:

'Having married a cock she must follow the cock; having married a dog, she must follow the dog; having married a carrying pole, she must carry it for life'.

At a much later period and in a different historical context, Mao Tse-tung wrote that the Chinese people had three ropes round their necks, but the women had four: political authority, clan authority, religious authority and the authority of the husband. These authorities embodied the whole feudal and patriarchal ideology and social system.

The Confucian ideology met with opposition from, among others, the Legalist school of thought, which was the most important of the Hundred Schools of Thought. Representing the interests of the newly emerging landlord class, it propagated the materialist view that "man can conquer nature" in opposition to the idealist view of "abiding by the will of heaven and fate". It advocated changes of the law and reform and opposed returning to the ancient order and retrogression. It stood for replacing the "rites" with the rule of "law" and the dictatorship of the slave-owning class with that of the landlord class. It demanded one unified China governed by one law. That precisely was the reason why they were called Legalists. In fact, throughout history these two schools debated and their polemics never ceased. The earliest refutation of the Confucian theory of learning came from Hsun Kuang (C.3rd BC), an eminent Confucian scholar who broke with orthodoxy and became an outstanding Legalist. He said: "Not hearing is not as good as hearing; hearing is not as good as seeing; seeing is not as good as knowing; but knowing is not as good as practising. Only when study is put into practice is it accomplished.

"The wisdom of the so-called sage is the sum total accumulation of all mankind".

These questions became urgent after 1840 when China suffered humiliating defeats during the Opium war. The common people were enraged and tried to fight foreign powers back; the scholar-bureaucrats felt humiliated that the heaven-ordained Confucian world should be so bullied by the barbarians from afar. A new idea arose: Confucian scholarship-knowledge is not enough; we need to supplement it with Western science and technology. The imperial examination system was abolished in 1906, and modern schools on Western, especially American, patterns were introduced.

In feudal China, the theory of social hierarchy and the concept of patriarchal ethics which Confucius used for holding on to the slave system were modified by the intellectuals of the landlord class and made the theoretical basis of the feudal system and the ideological weapon of the landlord class to exercise its rule over the peasants. Confucianism was so much inter-wined with the feudal system that any peasant revolt directed against the feudal system had necessarily to be directed against Confucianism also. That is why in the feudal society of China which lasted more than 2000 years, all the peasants' struggles, from that of Chen Sheng and Wu Kuang(leaders of China's first peasant uprising against the feudal Chin dynasty,209 BC) to that of the Taiping(1851-64), invariably took Confucius and his thinking to task.

It is pertinent to point out that Hung Hsiu-chuan, leader of the Taiping rebellion, resolutely demolished the memorial tablet bearing Confucius' name and declared was on feudalism as early as 1843. To enlighten the working people to break the shackles imposed on them by the feudal class, he later made up the story of the "Emperor God" who displayed Confucius' books and pointed out that there were "too many fallacies" in them which led people astray. This "Emperor God" ordered a heavenly attendant to flog Confucius. During the protracted period of feudalism, Confucius had been the "absolute authority" whom nobody dared to offend. Now Hung Hsiu-chuan had this "sage" of the feudal society kneel before the "Emperor God", the personification of the oppressed peasantry. He was tried and beaten.('Struggle between opposing and worshipping Confucius over the last 100 years', *Peking Review*, No26, June 28,1974).

The struggle continued during the May 4 Movement of 1919 and afterwards and even during the nation-wide campaign against Lin Piao in the 1970s. However, in the years since the death of Mao in 1976, along with other changes of a fundamental nature, Confucianism was also being revived, dug out of the grave and Confucius was being applauded as a sage as was done earlier both in pre-revolutionary China and the Western world.

Taoism

Taoism is one of the most significant schools of thought in the age of the Hundred Schools of Thought. It was one of the two most studied

schools and was clearly anti-Confucian in essence. Taoism begins with the ancient philosopher Lao Tzu or "the Old Master" who, according to Needham, is "one of the most shadowy figures in Chinese history"(See Needham's *Science and Civilization in China* Vol.2 *History of Scientific Thought*, CUP, 1969, p.35). Most of what we know about Lao Tzu comes to us in the form of stories of which some are rather difficult to believe, while others are probably true. According to one story, he was a keeper of records in Western China and lived a simple life. At the end of his life, he was upset with his people's lack of interest in developing the natural goodness that he was teaching and left for a life of meditation in which is now Tibet. At Hanako Gate, a guard tried to convince him to return to China, but failed. However, the guard did convince Lao Tzu to write his philosophy. Lao Tzu spent three days writing a 5000 character book which is now known as the *Tao Te Ching* or 'The Way to Power'. This work is regarded as the most important text in Taoism.

There has been extensive discussion concerning his probable date. According to old accounts such as Shih Chi, he—born probably around 604 BC, was a 6th century contemporary of Confucius. This view is contradicted by Vincent Shen, in whose opinion the text—Tao Teh Ching, was composed much later than Confucius(See his article captioned 'Lao Tzu's Metaphysics and his critique of Confucian ethics' in the book entitled *Morality, Metaphysics and Chinese Culture* edited jointly by Vincent Shen and Tran Van Doan). If one goes through the text, one gets the impression of it being composed in a period of social and political turmoil and sanguinary conflicts. Feng Yu-Lan, the most important authority on the subject, considers *Tao Teh Ching* to be a Warring States document. Needham accepts this time span; it, according to him, cannot be later since it was commented on by Han Fei Tzu (d.—233), criticized by Hsun Tzu (—298 to –238) and paralleled by Chuang Tzu (—369 to –286). Thus the general conclusion is that the life of Lao Tzu is to be placed within the 4th century BC, and that the *Tao Teh Ching* may be dated not long before 300 BC.

There is a tendency also, according to H.G. Creel, from at least the 3rd century BC, to attribute many sayings to Lao Tzu; in fact, many of the good Confucian sayings occurring in the 'Analects' are prefaced by the words, "Lao Tzu said" (See H.G. Creel, 'What is

Taoism?' in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* Vol.76, No.3, July-September 1956, pp.139-152). It shows that Confucian disciples who formulated the *Analects* and fought against the Taoist philosophy themselves could not shake off the influence of Lao Tzu's teachings.

Literally, the word 'Tao' means 'way'. It was not the right way of life within human society, but the way in which the universe worked i.e, the Order of Nature. However, scholars like Forke and Joseph Needham maintain that this word can only be left un-translated. The ancient graph has a 'head' and sign for 'going', hence the meaning 'Way', but it early became a technical term charged with philosophical and numinous significance.

According to Needham, Taoism had two origins. First, there were the philosophers of the Warring States Period who followed a Tao of Nature rather than a Tao of Human Society and therefore, instead of seeking favour in the courts of the princes like Confucius, withdrew into wilderness, in a way somewhat similar to the Jains and the Buddhists in India, there to mediate upon the Order of Nature, and to observe its innumerable manifestations. Needham asserts that Confucian knowledge was masculine and managing: the Taoists condemned it and sought after a feminine and receptive knowledge which could arise only as the fruit of a passive and yielding attitude in the observation of Nature.

The second root of Taoism was the body of ancient shamans and magicians which had entered the Chinese cultural arena at a very early stage from its northern and southern elements and which later concentrated on the north-eastern coastal regions especially in the States of Chhi and Yen. Under the names of 'wu' and 'fang shih' they played an important part in ancient Chinese life as the representatives of a kind of religion and magic(basically shamanistic), closely connected with the masses of the people and opposed to the ouranic State religion encouraged by the Confucians.

It might appear a bit puzzling to understand how these two different elements in ancient Chinese society could be combined so completely to form the Taoist 'religion' of later times. However, the fact is that in their earliest stages, science and magic are indistinguishable. As the Taoist scholars put emphasis on Nature, they were bound in due course to pass from purely observational to the expèrimental. In fact, the first beginnings of alchemy,

pharmaceutics and medicine were very closely associated with Taoism. But as observation passed over to experimentation, one crucial step was taken. As experimentation means manual operations, this task was taken over from the hands of the charmed circles of the slave/feudal aristocratic philosophy and of later bureaucratic literary culture. In one sense, this shift from the observational to the experimental signified not only the transition from magic/religion to proto-science/science, but also the shift from mental labour to manual labour—one of the "three great differences" that, according to Marx, emerged with the emergence of class society. In his own way, Needham makes the profound analysis: "Nothing was left therefore by which the people could distinguish the Taoist philosopher—based on the high abstractions of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu but stoking his alchemic furnace in order to prepare the pill of immortality and acquiring peace of mind by meditation on the workings of the Five Elements and the Yin and Yang—from the Taoist magician, writing out mysterious charms or engaging in liturgical rites for the control of dragon-spirits"(Needham, vol.2, p.34).

The Taoist texts are full of questions about Nature. Let us turn to Chuang Tzu: "How (ceaselessly) heaven revolves! How (constantly) earth abides at rest! Do the sun and the moon contend about their respective places? Is there someone presiding over and directing these things? Who binds and connects them together? …Then how does a cloud become rain, and the rain again form clouds? Winds rise in the north, one blows to the west, another to the east, while some rise upwards, uncertain of heir direction…Is there someone with nothing to do thus shakes the world? I venture to ask about the causes"Ch.14, cited in Needham,p.38).

Needham has referred to one of those famous imaginary interviews between Lao Tzu and Confucius which gives us some idea of what *tao* is all about.

'We have a little time today', said Confucius to Lao Tzu. May I ask you about the Great Tao?' Lao Tzu replied, 'Give a ceremonial bath to your mind! Cleanse your spirit! Throw away your sage wisdom! The Tao is dark and elusive, difficult to describe. However, I will outline it for you. Light(chao) came from darkness(ming), order(yu lun) from the formless(wu hsing). The Tao produces vital energy(seminal essence, ching-shen), and this gives birth to (organic)

forms; all the myriad things(reproduce their kind) shape giving rise to shape(wan wu i hsing hsiang seng—in these few words, Chuang Tzu condenses an appreciation of the fact that individual life-cycles of animals and plants may coinprise stages—eggs, larval forms, seeds, bulbs etc—which are in shape and appearance almost unrecognizably different from the familiar adult). Thus it is that animals with nine orfices are born from the womb, and those with eight from eggs. Life springs into existence without a visible source and disappears into infinity. It stands in the middle of a vast expanse, without visible exit, entrance or shelter. Those who seek for and follow (the Tao) are strong of body, clear of mind, and sharp of sight and hearing. They do not load their mind with anxieties, and are flexible in their adjustment to external conditions. Heaven cannot help being high, the earth cannot help being wide, the sun and moon cannot help going round, and all things of the creation cannot help but live and multiply (...). Such is the operation of the Tao. The most extensive "knowledge" does not necessarily know it, "reasoning" will not make men wise in it; the sages eschewed these things (...). However you try to add to it, it will not increase, whatever you try to take from it, it admits of no diminution so the sages have spoken of it. Fathomless, it is like the sea. Awe-inspiring, beginning again in cycles ever new Sustaining all things, it is never exhausted. In comparison with it, do not the teachings of the "gentlemen" deal merely with (superficial) externals (...)? What gives life to all creation and is itself inexhaustible—that is the Tao'(Chuang Tzu, Ch.22, cited in Needham, p.39)

It is evident from both the passages that both the inorganic and the biological come under the operation of the Tao. In the second passage a new element enters, namely, the contrast between this true knowledge, and the superficial scholastic social learning of the feudal scholars. Here the Taoists are clearly anti-feudal. And everything is governed by necessity. The other element is the reference to the physical as well as mental benefits to be obtained by those who follow the Tao. In course of time, this element formed a large part of Taoism, developing into a search for material immortality, in which the body would be preserved. For this purpose, the adept would have recourse to drugs and alchemical preparations, to yogistic breathing exercises, to sexual techniques and to gymnastics.

As we have pointed out, the observation of Nature was the essence of the Taoist thought. And in this observation, water played a very important role. The observation of Nature as distinct from the management of Society, requires a receptive passivity in contrast to a commanding activity; it implies a freedom from all preconceived theories in contrast to an attachment to a set of social convictions. It is primarily in this sense that Needham interprets the symbols of 'water' and 'the feminine' so dear to the early Taoist schools and so perplexing to the later commentators. According to Tao Te Ching,

The highest good is like that of water. The goodness of water is that it benefits the ten thousand creatures, yet itself does not wrangle, but is content with the places that all men disdain. It is this that makes water so near to the Tao.

Water is yielding and assumes the shape of whatever vessel it is placed in, it seeps and soaks through invisible crevices, its mirror-like surface reflects all Nature. Water also, running down to the valleys, receives all kinds of defilements, but cleanses itself and is never defiled.

Needham asserts that the symbols of water and the female have not only philosophical, but also great social significance. Unlike the Confucian or legalist conception of leadership from above, we reach the Taoists principle of leadership from within. Here is an example:

How did the great rivers and seas get their kingship over the hundred lesser streams?

Through the merit of being lower than they; that was how they got their kingship.

Therefore the sage, in order to be above the people,
Must speak as though he were lower than they,
In order to guide them
He must put himself behind them.
Thus when he is above, the people have no burden,
When he is ahead, they feel no hurt.
Thus everything under heaven is glad to be directed by him
And does not find(his guidance) irksome.
The sage does not enter into competition
And therefore no one competes with him.

Let us now turn to the examples of the 'feminine' symbol. It is from Lao Tzu book, Chapter 6:

The Valley Spirit never dies (...).
It is named the Mysterious Feminine (...).
And the Doorway of the Mysterious Feminine.
Is the root (from which) Heaven and Earth (sprang).
It is the thread forever woven;
And those who use it can accomplish all things.

After referring to this and other passages, Needham makes a profound statement. He argues that the Taoism stands apart from the Confucian and Legalist thoughts. The Confucian and Legalist social-ethical thought-complex was masculine, managing, hard, dominating, aggressive, rational and donative. The Taoists broke with it radically and completely by stressing all that was feminine, tolerant, yielding, permissive, withdrawing, mystical and receptive. In fact, their very exaltation of the 'Valley Spirit' was an affront to the Confucians. And the female receptiveness which the Taoists sought to display in their observation of Nature was inextricably connected with the feminine yieldingness which they believed should guide human relations.

Needham opines that the Taoists were opposed to the then existing feudal society because the yieldingness they believed in was totally incompatible with that society. It was, in his opinion, suited for a cooperative collectivist society. Such a society did at one time exist in the 'primitive collectivism of the villages', not only before the period of 'bronze-age proto-feudalism' as Needham states, but also before the slave epoch in Chinese society. It was this Taoist anti-feudalism that led to the emergence of equalitarian secret societies of anti-foreign and anti-dynastic tendency. Because of their feminine character, women were given relative freedom of activity by the Taoists. Julia Kristeva in her book *About Chinese Women* points out that the daughters of the Taoist 'Boxers' took part in military and political struggles because of the limited freedom accorded to women in non-Han, non-Confucian families.

It is pertinent to point out that the Taoist idea of even distribution of wealth drew the attention of the peasant rebels. Hundreds of peasant insurrections broke out under the cloak of Taoism up to the beginning of the 20th century, generally using Taoist idea of even distribution of wealth as their banner, attacking the feudal government. Thus in the interests of the present struggles, the peasant rebels looked back

to the past drawing sustenance and inspiration in a substantial way(For the economic ideas of the Taoists, see Hu Jichuang, *A Concise History of Chinese Economic Thought*, Beijing 1988).

Chinese culture, according to some scholars, is deeply syncretist: the world-view of individuals and social groups was structured with elements of both Confucianism and Taoism, as well as, as in later years, with Buddhist ideas and numerous other influences, a point stressed by the French Sinologist, Henri Maspero(Le Taoism et les Religions Chinoises Paris, Editions Gallimard 1971, 1971). No doubt, the Taoism of the great texts could only be read by the educated upper class, but the social importance of the Taoist world-view perhaps derived from its remarkable consistency with the folk perspective of everyday village life, as opposed to the highly formal, ruling-class ritualism of Confucianism.

Let us now turn to the Taoist world-view, which has some basic elements. First, the Taoist world-view is one of a unified world which is made manifest to human beings in paired opposites. The Taoists were profoundly conscious of the universality of change and transformation—this was one of their deepest scientific insights. It is a world of constant change, a world in eternal flux, although the change is cyclical. Human understanding in the world is seen as relative to the perspective of the viewer; therefore, this view eschews absolute judgements. Understanding is achieved by empirical investigation of particular circumstances; only this allows one to take appropriate action based on the specific situation in which one finds oneself. This should be considered in more detail.

The Taoist world-view presents the world as unified, although this was in many ways the Chinese view in general. Joseph Needham writes that "...the organicist view in which every phenomenon was connected with every other according to hierarchical order was universal among Chinese thinkers" (*The Grand Titration*, London, 1969, p.21). The Chinese did not separate spirit and matter and therefore produced no theories as to which one is primary—mind or body. Needham notes the particular importance of this view of unity. "If there was one idea which the Taoist philosophers stressed more than any other it was the unity of nature" (See his *Science and Civilization in China* Vol.2, CUP 1956). In fact, this notion of unity is widespread in Chinese culture in general, and never absent in Taoist

thought. Perhaps, this is the logic that, according to J.W.Freiberg, preserved most Chinese thought(See his article, 'The Dialectic in China: Maoist and Taoist' in *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* Vol.9, No.1 January-March 1977).

Secondly, unity also meant that the principles of the microcosm(everyday) were necessarily the same as the general principles of the macrocosm; to understand the workings of the former was therefore to gain insight into the latter. Throughout the Taoist literature working class individuals such as butchers, wheelwrights and even thieves learn these principles through mastery of their crafts.

Thirdly, the Taoist element of unity proposes an original unity, from which manifold world has been derived. Metaphysically, this led to Taoist efforts to regain the primitive unity through meditation techniques and rejection of the "world of ten thousand things", while politically it led to Taoist efforts to debunk the Confucian support of the divisions of social hierarchy.

Mohism

"Mohism" is a term given to a philosophical school founded by a person named Mo Ti or "Mozi"("Master Mo") who is generally believed to have lived in the 5th and 4th century BC. Unlike Confucianism and Taoism, Mohism was completely overwhelmed by the social upheavals at the end of the Warring States Period and *Ssuma Chhien* did not even know the approximate date of the birth and death of its founder. There are three available dates: Sun Yirang dates him 468-376 BC; Qian Mu dates him 479-381 BC; and Fang Shouchu places him between 490 and 403 BC This school flourished during the Warring States Period which also coincided with the Hundred Schools of Thought.

Mozi and his followers initiated philosophical argumentation and debate in China. He, like Confucius, kept a school for the dissemination of his ideas for those who wished to become officials of the feudal princes in the ducal states. They were the first in the tradition to engage, like Socrates, in ancient Greece, in a search for objective moral standards and to give step by step, tightly reasoned arguments for their views. Mozi was the first man to offer a strong intellectual challenge to Confucianism. His doctrines were those of

universal love and the condemnation of offensive war. This school died out during the decades following the establishment of the Ch'in dynasty by Ch'in Shi Huang-ti in 221 BC.

It is widely believed by scholars that no philosopher was more important in the Warring States Period than Mo Ti. In many respects, his influence was then greater than that of any other man, including Confucius. In fact, alone among the ancient philosophers, Mo Ti founded a personal school which transmitted and developed his doctrines. His followers were certainly the best organized group and were in many ways the most innovative of all the philosophies of ancient China. The Mohist, according to John Knoblock, attracted considerable attention because of their expertise in defensive warfare, which made them indispensable to beleaguered rulers and also for their skill in dialectics which enabled them to score victories in the formal debates known as "discriminations" that characterized the newly emerging feudal courts from the bosom of slave society during the Chou period. The extent of influence this school exercised over others can be ascertained from the fact that no school or thinker was immune to the influence of their ideas. Both Mencius and Xun Kuang vigorously attacked aspects of the Mohist doctrines, but both, particularly Xun, were influenced by Mohist views on the goals and aims of government.

Most historians believe that Mozi was a member of the lower artisan class who managed to climb his way up the social ladder to join an official post during those periods of turmoil and intellectual awakening. Mozi was a native of the State of Lu(today's Tengzhou in Shantung) of which Confucius was once governor. He served as a minister in the State of Song for a time. Like Confucius, Mozi was known to have maintained a school for those who desired to become officials serving in the different ruling courts of the Warring States.

Mozi was said to have been a carpenter and was extremely skilled in creating devices, designing everything starting from mechanical birds to wheeled, mobile "cloud ladders" used to besiege city walls. Although he did not hold a high official position, Mozi was sought out by various rulers as an expert on fortification. He was schooled in Confucianism in his early years but viewed Confucianism as being too fatalistic and stressing too much on elaborate celebrations and funerals (which bears testimony to the influence that Chou rites had

exerted on his thinking) which, he felt, was detrimental to the livelihood and production of common people. His works are filled with quotations from the 'Odes' and 'Documents', abound in detail of the government and actions of the early sage kings and exhibit a wide variety of knowledge. His works contain the earliest prose essays on a single topic. According to Zhuangzi, "Being fond of study, Mo Ti was broadly learned, but would not tolerate differences of opinion". He could manage to attract a large following during his lifetime which rivalled that of Confucius. His followers consisting mostly of technicians and craftsmen were organized in a disciplined order that studied both Mozi's philosophical and technical writings. That Mohist school posed a challenge to the Confucian school is also attested by Mencius (371-289 BC) who lamented that the "words of Mozi and Yang Zhu fill the social world".

It is evident that Mozi's origins highlight the social mobility of the era. In fact, the best explanation of the rise of Mohism links it to the growth in the influence of crafts and guilds of China. Mohism became influential when technical intelligence began to challenge traditional priest-craft in ancient China. The demand of the Warring States Period for scholars perhaps drew him from the lower ranks as he was an expert in fortifications for which there was understandably a great demand during that era of intense conflicts and conquest of territories.

The social background of the Mohists distinguishes them from most other early Chinese thinkers, who seem to have been mainly members of privileged social groups, hereditary officials, government administrators or rural priests. Their low origins help to explain why the Mohists made no use of the paradigmatic moral contrast of Confucian ethics, that between the 'junzi' and 'xiao ren'—terms that in Confucian usage carried a moral connotation ("noble man vs. "petty man") but originally referred to social rank ("princeling" or "gentleman" vs. "commoner"). To the Mohists, the exemplary individual is typically not the 'junzi', but the 'ren ren' (human man or man of goodwill), a term with no apparent class overtones.

According to C. Frazer (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*), a corollary of these conjectures about their social origins is that Mo Di and many of his early followers may have had little formal education and would have been relatively universal in the classical

Chinese written language. This suggestion would help to explain the characteristic style of the core Mohist doctrinal essay, most of which are written in a simple, highly repetitive manner well suited to memorization and oral delivery, yet distinctive in the early Chinese literature for its lack of elegance. Parts of the text, 'Hanfeizi', show signs of having been composed in a colloquial dialect rather than the more terse, 'graceful'/elitist written language.

Our primary sources for the thought of Mozi and his followers are a corpus of anonymously authored texts collected into a book called the 'Mozi'. Other less direct sources include anecdotes and comments about the Mohists preserved in early texts such as the 'Lushi Chunqiu', 'Hanfeizi', 'Zhuangzi' and 'Huainanzi' and criticism of them by two of the major Confucian opponents, namely Mencius(372-289 BC) and Xunzi(289-238 BC). The 'Mozi' is a diverse compilation of polemical essays, short dialogues, anecdotes about Mozi and compact philosophical discussions.

The initial problem scholars face is that our knowledge about Mozi, like most other non-Confucian classical thinkers, is very limited. According to some sources, he was a disenchanted Confucian from the state of Lu, whose early closeness with ritualism made him an effective adversary to Confucian doctrines. Other texts suggest that he was from the state of Song and do not speak of any Confucian connection, and instead, note that the surname "Mo", which means "ink mark", may refer not to Mo Di's family, but rather to the fact that he had been subjected to "tattooing", a punishment often meted out to criminals in the classical era. Thus, according to this account, 'Mozi" stands for the "tattooed master". A later branch of the school formulated a sophisticated semantic theory, epistemology, utilitarian ethics and theory of analogical reasoning and undertook enquiries into such diverse fields as geometry, mechanics, optics and economics.

There is a strong argument in favour of the view that it is Mozi, not Confucius, who deserves the title of China's first philosopher. Before the rise of the Mohist school, 'Ru' or so-called Confucian thought seems to have consisted mostly of wise aphorisms, offering moral coaching aimed at developing virtuous 'li'(norms of ritual propriety). Mozi and his followers were the first in the Chinese tradition to point out that conformity to traditional mores in itself

does not ensure that actions are morally right. This critical insight motivated a self-conscious search for objective moral standards, by which the Mohists hoped to unify the moral judgement of everyone in society, thus eliminating social disorder and ensuring that morality prevailed. The normative standard through which they proposed to achieve these aims was the "benefit"(li) of "all under Heaven". Actions, practices and policies that promote the overall welfare of society were to be considered morally right, those that interfere with it morally wrong. Heaven is the noblest and wisest agent in the cosmos. This framework motivated a set of 10 core ethical and political doctrines, which the Mohists sought to persuade the rulers of their time to put into practice. These are the 'Ten Theses'. These are as follows:

Elevating the Worthy: Rulers should honour the worthy and employ the able rather than advance relatives and favourites.

Conforming to Superiors: The people should be of one mind with their superiors so that unity is maintained.

Universal Love: It is only by an ungraded love that allows no special treatment for one's own kin that a secure society could be built up.

Condemnation of Aggression: Warfare is always unprofitable and if rulers could be taught this simple truth, there would be peace.

Moderation in Expenditure: The state should expend its resources only on those things which bring benefit to the people.

Moderation in Funerals: The sages had simple funerals and the Ru doctrines advocating elaborate funerals and extended periods of mourning are falsifications of antiquity.

The Will of Heaven or Honouring Heaven: The clearest standard in the world, which Mo Ti would use as his square and compass.

Explaining the Spirits and serving the Spirits: It is a defence of the traditional belief in spirits and a refutation of Ru skepticism.

Condemnation of Music: It is a refutation of Ru doctrines advocating elaborate musical performances as instruments of state ceremony.

Condemnation of Fate: it is a refutation of the fatalistic doctrines of certain Ru.

During the Warring States Period, the Mohists were organized in tight-knit paramilitary bands. They were specially trained in what we may call the arts of defensive warfare. One of the major doctrines of Mohism was that offensive warfare was evil and the cause of most of the suffering of the time. It means that they were opposed to

the gobbling up of small states by big states that was the main feature of the time. The Mohists were known for matching their actions to their beliefs, and Mohist groups made careers of racing from one area of China to another, offering their services to rulers whose states were under attack. Rulers who accepted Mohists into their service found them to be skilled in engineering devices designed to repel attacks on walled cities and fortresses.

Mohist rejection of offensive warfare was one of a set of clearly defined doctrines that set this school apart from others. These doctrines rested upon the belief that the good was whatever produced the greatest well-being among the people. According to the Mohists, this was the standard that Heaven used when rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked, and they also claimed that the sage rulers of the distant past had used this criterion to rule effectively, rather than the ritual patters of Confucianism.

Mohist doctrines stood for the elimination of extraneous ritual and music, and the enforcement of a strict political hierarchy under the ruling Son of Heaven, whom, as they believed, was always selected by Heaven and in close touch with that ethereal being. Thus while Confucius was advocating the "return to the (Chou) rites" and thus giving sustenance to the Chou slave society, the Mohists stood against it.

In fact, the social origin of the Mohists probably played a role in motivating certain basic features of their thought, particularly their focus on finding objective ethical standards. For the Confucians, the traditional social roles and ritual etiquette of the waning Chou dynasty provide a basis for consensus in ethical judgements. The Mohists identify far less with these traditional mores and so seek other ethical guidelines. They propose to judge practices not by whether they conform to the traditional rituals of a lost dynasty(as was the case with Confucius), but by utilitarian standards, such as whether they work for the material benefit of society. Remaining true to their class origin, the Mohists spoke for those of the lower strata of the social order who will be among the first to starve when the economy is mismanaged or to die pursuing the military ambitions of a warmonger-ruler. As a matter of fact, a theme to which the Mohist texts return repeatedly is the problem of meeting the basic subsistence needs of the common people.

Social factors could also have contributed to the Mohists' opposition to costly, extravagant funeral rituals and musical entertainment. As members of the lower orders of society, they probably felt some sort of repulsion to these elements of the traditional high culture of the Chou and regarded them as wasteful. Moreover, the Mohists' conception of 'Tian'(Heaven) as an anthromorphic deity and their conviction that 'Tian', ghosts and spirits reliably punish the wicked and reward the good many reflect folk religious beliefs that could exert hardly any influence on Confucian and Taoist thinkers coming from higher social positions.

As A.C.Graham points out('Disputes of the Tao', 1989), however, despite the likely influence of the Mohists' social origin on their thought, there is no evidence that Mohism represents the ideology of a self-conscious craft or artisan class that sought to reform the established political order. Rather, the Mohists are ambitious, capable commoners for whom the passing of the feudal system and the development of centralized, merit-based bureaucracies have made promotion to the officer of knight('shi') class a possibility. Like most of the early Chinese thinkers, as Graham argues, excepting the Taoists, the Mohists advocate a centralized, hierarchical political system directed by virtuous leaders, and they aspire to positions of responsibility within such a system. Hence their doctrine of "Elevating the Worthy" emphasizes promotion to office of anyone with ability, including farmers and artisans.

Mohism and Confucianism compared

De Bary and William Theodore in their book *Sources of Chinese Tradition from earliest times to 1600* (Vol.I Second Edition, Columbia University Press, NY, 1999) have thrown light on the similarities and dissimilarities between Mohism and Confucianism.

Similarities: 1) Both stood for a social hierarchy based on relationships between subordinates and superiors. Such a structure demands a large bureaucratic government.

2) Both believe in a top down power structure, starting with Heaven and down through societal ranks to the peasants.

3) Heaven, to both of them, shows displeasure through natural phenomenon, such as famines and floods.

4) Both stress the importance of education.

5) Both hold that man should be governed through benevolence and righteousness.

6) Both venerate the past and call upon Sage Kings as positive examples of just rule and behaviour.

Differences: 1) The Mohists believed in a type of "free will" and thus viewed Heaven's displeasure as an effect of unjust rule, while Confucians believed in a type of "predestination" or fatalism that viewed Heaven's displeasure as foretelling unjust rule. Such thinking made astrological knowledge, including keeping an accurate calendar, extremely important to a Confucian emperor.

2) The Mohists were more utilitarian and regarded music and rites as worthless; on the other hand, Confucians believed that an ethical system got strengthened with rites, music, the rectification of names etc. and these constituted the backbone of a righteous, prosperous society.

3) The Mohists condemned anything that did not benefit the majority of people, and thus they condemned offensive warfare. The Confucians believed in helping/considering those within the family before considering those outside of the family, and they did not make any distinction between offensive and defensive warfare.

4) The Mohists stressed practical education e,g, learning a trade or skill, while Confucians valued a literary, fine arts education that was basically elitist in character.

The important point is that the Mohists shared with Confucianism and other conservative philosophies a faith in the bedrock foundation of Chou political culture: social order is dependent on the personal qualities of the ruler.

The most notable doctrine of Mohism, one which the Mohists viewed as the essence of their beliefs, was their doctrine of universal love. What they meant by "universal love" was this: an attitude towards all others that viewed each of them as of equal value with oneself, with no distinctions of affection made among any. Under such an imperative, an individual was expected to have no regard for parents, spouse or children, nor for his or her own person and would make no distinction between the needs of a stranger and those of his near and dear ones.

The following anecdote, recorded about 250 BC, conveys the radical, unnatural emotive commitment that the Mohists were viewed

as making in taking the public good rather than personal feelings to be so absolute and imperative:

There was in the State of Ch'in a Mohist master named Fu Tun whose son murdered a man. King Hui of Ch'in(r. 337-311 BC) said, "You are old, sir, and you have no other sons. I have already ordered the officers not to execute your son. I pray that you will permit me to spare your boy". "The laws of the Mohists", replied Fu Tun, "say: 'Murderers shall die and those who inflict injury shall be maimed'. This law prevents people from committing murder and assault. Preventing the commission of murder and assault is an act of great righteousness. Your Majesty may wish to grant me the gift of sparing my son, but I cannot do other than carry out the laws of the Mohists". And so he refused the king's offer and his son was executed.

Needless to state, non-Mohists would find such radical ethical demands incompatible with normal human psychology. For the Mohists, however, to value all other people as highly as one spontaneously values those within one's private sphere was the pivot of their entire philosophy.

Unlike almost all other types of early Chinese philosophy, Mohism exhibits a deep commitment to the power of Reason. In fact, they, according to some, were the only true rationalist thinkers in Classical China. The Mohists argued in a rational fashion, always attempting to justify their claims through careful arguments. In can be argued that it was through the Mohists that Chinese culture was presented with the option of making Reason the pivot of intellectual enquiry, as it was in Greece or Rome.

Feng Yu-Lan says that the Mohists represented what might almost be called the 'chivalrous' element in Chinese feudalism; they preached pacifism only up to a certain point and trained themselves n military acts in order to rush to the help of a weak state attacked by a strong one. It appears that their practice of the techniques of fortification and defence was probably what led them to take interest in the basic methods of science and to those studies in mechanics and optics which, according to Needham, are among the earliest records of Chinese science that one possesses.

Legalism

The Legalist school was a major school of thought opposed to the Confucian school during the Warring States Period(475-221 BC).

Its chief exponents were Shang Yang, Hsun Kuang(313-238 BC) and Han Fei(280-233 BC). Representing the interests of the new emerging landlord class, it propagated the materialist view that "man can conquer nature" in opposition to the idealist view of "abiding by the will of Heaven and fate". It advocated changes of the law and reform and opposed a return to the old order and retrogression. It stood for the replacement of the rule of "rites" with the rule of "law" and dictatorship of the slave-owning class with the dictatorship of the landlord class. Politically, all those belonging to this school of thought stood for "a government by law". Thus the advocates of this school got the name Legalists or the *Fa Chia*.

After the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-8 AD), the Legalist school had all along been rejected and attacked by the Confucian school which was exalted and regarded as the orthodox school of thought. Despite this, at every important historical period, there were statesmen and thinkers coming to the fore to carry on the tradition of the Legalist school to make reforms. The Legalists throughout the ages were the representatives of the China's fine traditional culture.

Before we deal with the Legalist thinkers, it is better to refer, however briefly, to the fundamental ideas of the *Fa Chia* or the Legalists. The basic idea of the Legalists was that *li*, the complex of customs, usages, ceremonies etc administered paternalistically according to Confucian idea, was inadequate. Instead, they put forward the idea of *fa* or positive law, particularly *hsien ting fa*, 'laws fixed beforehand', to which, as Needham explains, everything in the State, from the ruler himself down to the lowest public slave, was bound to submit, subject to sanctions of the most cruellest kind. The law-giving prince must surround himself with an aura of *wei* (majesty) and *shih* (authority), besides possessing the art of statecraft, of conducting affairs and handling men.

The central conception of *fa* enacted by the law-giving prince without any consideration of morality or goodwill of the people, appears everywhere in Shang Yang and *Han Fei Tzu* (the writings of Han Fei). Rule for rewards and punishments are made amply clear and published in all parts of the realm so that people will know how to behave. It is expected that the law should apply itself and will not require constant interference of the ruler. 'If the law is strong, the country is strong; if it is weak, the country will be weak' says *Han*

Fei Tzu. 'If small offences do not occur, great crimes will not follow, and the people will commit no crimes and disorder will not arrive', *Han Fei Tzu* goes on to say. Ideas such as these run through all Legalist writings. As a matter of fact, it was the Legalist version of the famous phrase in Historical Classic(*Shu Ching*), *phi i chi phi*— 'punishment to end punishment'.

Much has been said about the draconian nature of the punishment as recommended by the Legalists. Men serving in the army were divided into squads of five men each and if one of these were killed, the other four were beheaded for allowing it to happen. Ranks depended on the number of the enemy slain, i.e, the more one kills the enemy, the more does one climb up the army ladder. There was an elaborate system of denunciation; omission to denounce a culprit was punished by the friend being sawn into two and other tortures were employed(For details, see J.J.L. Duyvendak, *The Book of Lord Shang; a classic of the Chinese School of Law*, London 1928, p.60).

Shang Yang

The original name of Shang Yang was Kungsun Yang. He was a native of the State of Wei, a ducal state in the Warring States Period(475-221 BC) in the northern part of the present-day Honan province. When he was still young, he went to the State of Wei(this Wei and his home state Wei are two different Chinese characters with the same pronunciation), which was another ducal state with its capital in what is now Kaifeng in Honan province, and was one of the places where the Legalist school originated. There, he became a retainer of the prime minister(an adherent of the Legalist school), and he summed up the theory of the earlier Legalists and their experience in carrying out reforms. Later, he settled in the State of Ch'in(one of the major ducal states at that time occupying what is now Shensi province and southwestern Kansu province with its capital in present-day Hsienyang) and was made prime minister and commander of the armed forces in recognition of his distinguished service in effecting reforms. As he was given a fief in Shang, he became known in history as Shang Yang.

The Warring States Period in which Shang Yang lived was a period of great social upheavals when the decadent slave system was giving way to the rising feudal system. The slave-owning aristocrats, battered

by the slave uprisings and the revolution of the up-and-coming landlord class, were sinking fast. The contradiction between the declining slave-owning class on the on hand and the new emerging landlord class on the other, and the contradiction between the demands for unification on the part of the landlord class and the masses and the actual state of the rival regimes caused by ducal states under the slave system was extremely acute. There was also very sharp struggle between revolution and restoration, between progress and retrogression.

It was a situation of "great disorder under heaven". The question was: in what direction should the society move? In fact, every class and every political group put forward its own programme. This was the historical background of "contention among a hundred schools of thought" . The Legalist school, Liang Hsiao asserts, was the only school that showed the direction of social progress while all the rest failed to produce effective measures to cope with the burning problems of the day. In grappling with the Confucianists, Shan Yang took over and developed the theories of the forerunners of the Legalist school, formulated and put into practice a relatively comprehensive Legalist school line which fulfilled the missions required by the times and promoted social progress(For details, see Liang Hsiao, 'On Shang Yang'—A Representative of the Legalist school in Chinese History' in *Peking Review* No.34, August 23, 1974).

The ideological line is the theoretical basis of the political line. The struggle between the two ideological lines—between the Legalist school represented by Shang Yang and the reactionary Confucian school—found its expression mainly in the struggle between a progressive conception of history standing for social changes and a reactionary one standing for a return to the old and retrogression. Confucius opposed changes and advocated "restraining oneself and returning to the rites" and thus going back to the slave society of the Western Chou Dynasty(1066?-771 BC). Shang Yang's near-contemporary Mencius inherited this back-to-the-old line of Confucius and advocated doing everything in the old way. Alleging that social development in his time was inferior to that of the past and that things were getting worse generation after generation, Mencius reviled that all new emerging forces in history which replaced the old were arch "criminals" guilty on many counts and he

attacked the newly emerging elements of the time. Shang Yang, on the other hand, opposed a return to the old and was against remaining in status quo. Proceeding from the conception of history that "the way of doing things should change with a change of conditions", Shang Yang was of the view that on should recognize the changes of the times and take measures which are in conformity with the exigencies of the situation. In spite of the valuable experiences they had accumulated in their reforms, no Legalist of the earlier period was able to work out, both in theory and practice, a line for carrying out reforms as distinct and comprehensive as Shang Yang did. No doubt, Shang Yang excelled his predecessors in making great contributions to the formulation of an ideological line for the Legalist school.

Politically, Shang Yang set forth the line of "rule of law" which was totally opposed to the Confucian line of "rule of rites". In a class society, neither rite nor law stands above classes. From Confucius who chanted "benevolence" to Mencius who advocated "benevolent rule", the "rule of rites" as preached by the Confucian school, for all its talk about compassion and love common to humanity, did not exclude suppression and punishment. When the Confucian school opposed the replacement of "rule of rites" with "rule of law", it was actually trying to safeguard and continue to enforce the old law of the slave-owning class. Mencius also advocated meting out the severest punishment to the rising landlord class for introducing reforms.

In openly advocating the "rule of law", Shang Yang was in fact advocating changes to replace the authority of the slave-owning class with that of the landlord class. Shang Yang held that in governing a country, it was necessary to grasp the essential social abuses of the day. "There are many idlers and a few farmers", and "one man tills to feed a hundred". This, he stated, was a big social problem of the day. He put the idlers o society under five main categories known collectively as the "evil people". They were "those who eat without working, those who enjoy honours without doing military service, those who are dignified without official ranks, those who are rich without official emolument and those who give orders without official posts". They were mainly hereditary nobles of slave-owning houses, big slave-owning merchants, and the disciples of Confucius roaming

around to preserve old institutions and seeking official posts. Besides living in extravagance on the social wealth created by the working people like pests destroying farm crops, they preached rites, music, benevolence and righteousness in the realm of the superstructure o oppose the new feudal relations. Shang Yang hated this most and denounced the Confucian precepts of "benevolence and righteousness, rites and music" as the "lice" pestering humanity. He asserted that the urgent task of the time was to get rid of these "evils" and "lice".

To get rid of the "evils" and "lice", Shang Yang put forward a line of reform which had as its main content the enforcement of the law, promotion of agricultural production and military training and operations. No doubt these measures were directed against the declining forces of the slave-owners. Side by side, one should not overlook the fact that shang Yang's "rule of law" also included the suppression of the working people, as this was determined by the nature of the exploiting class to which Shang Yang and his political partners belonged. Added to this, Shang Yang's ide of "eliminating war with war" and "abolishing punishment with punishment" clearly affirmed his stand of using the new emerging landlord class' war for unification—progressive by the standards of the time—to eliminate wars among rival reactionary slave-owners aimed at building up their own ducal states, and of using the dictatorship of the landlord class to replace that of the slave-owning class.

Applying the Legalist theories of reform in close connection with the specific conditions in the State of Ch'in, he carried out reforms in Ch'in twice by introducing a series of measures to destroy the old and build up the new. They included awards for military exploits, abolition of the institutions of hereditary official posts and emolument and thereby establishing the political authority of the landlord class; introducing the county system throughout the country, strengthening centralized power, resolutely enforcing the "rule of law" across the land so as to further strengthen the dictatorship of the landlord class; abolishing the nine-squares(*ching tien*) system, "breaking up the paths and earthen embankments that formed farmland borders", giving priority to agricultural production and restricting commerce, calling on people to reclaim wasteland and giving legal recognition to the feudal land ownership and so promoting the development of the feudal

economy. On the strength of violence, he demolished the political and economic institutions of slavery in the State of Ch'in and played an important role in the transformation from the old system to the new.

Hsun Kuang and his Legalist Ideas

Hsun Kuang(313-238 BC) was a native of the State of Chao(in what is now the western part of Hopei Province, the central and northern parts of Shansi Province) in the latter days of the Warring States Period. Known as Hsun Ching in his time, he was a materialist thinker and an outstanding representative of the Legalist school. He gave lectures in Lintzu(north of present-day Yitu in Shantung Province), the capital city of the State of Chi, and had considerable influence. Among his disciples were the famous Legalists, Han Fei and Li Ssu. Only thirty two of his articles, collated in his work 'Hsun Tzu', are now extant. Many of them are militant political essay and have been preserved to this day. Before we proceed to take up Hsun Kuang, let us refer, however briefly, to some other Legalist activists.

There were some other Legalists to whom we would refer briefly. One of them was Li Kuei(455-395 BC). When he was the prime minister of the State of Wei, he carried out political and economic reforms to consolidate the rule of the new emerging landlord class and deal blows at the restorationist forces of the slave-owning aristocrats. His work 'Fa Ching' exercised considerable influence on the Legalists of the later days. Then we have Shen Pu-hai(385-337 BC), a native of the State of Cheng, who was a Legalist in the middle years of the Warring states Period. He had assisted the ruler of the State of Han in carrying out the Legalist line. Most of the articles in his work 'Shen Tzu' are lost. Another Legalist was Wu Chi(?-381 BC), a native of the State of Wei. He was an expert in military science. He had served as a government official in the States of Lu, Wei and Chu at different times. When working under the ruler of the State of Chu, he introduced some political and economic policies with marked effects. The slave=owning aristocrats later killed him with arrows(See Chin Yun-ko's 'Contention between Hsun Kuang and Mencius is a Two-line Struggle', Peking Review No.44 November 1, 1974).

After the introduction of reforms by Shang Yang, the question of

transferring political power in the State of Ch'in from the hands of the declining slave-owning class to the hands of the new emerging landlord class was basically solved, and this promoted social progress. Agricultural production developed and the country's military strength grew. The success of Shang Yang's reforms alarmed the declining slave-owning class both inside and outside the State of Ch'in and gave rise to a restorationist adverse current against Ch'in and Legalists. Mencius(390-305 BC), the chief exponent of the Confucian school at that time, was the mouthpiece of this adverse current.

The book *Mencius*, which directed its main attacks on Shang Yang's reforms, according to Chin Yun-ko, set forth the theories and policies for restoring the slave-system. Politically, Mencius described the new emerging landlord class' "rule of law" exercised by Shang Yang and his suppression of the slave-owning aristocrats' resistance as "not benevolent". He openly advocated that a "policy of benevolence" should be adopted towards the slave-owning aristocrats and that the system of "hereditary official posts and emoluments" should be reinstituted. He condemned Shang Yang as "bloodthirsty" and openly demanded that he should be put to death. Meanwhile, he went from one place to another to incite the rulers of the ducal states to unleash a war for the restoration of the slave system. In economic affairs, Mencius was very critical of Shang Yang for having abolished the nine squares land system and held that a "policy of benevolence" must begin with restoration of this system so that the declining slave-owning class would regain the hereditary fiefs and their slaves. Following the demise of Duke Hsiao of Ch'in—who backed Shang Yang—in 338 BC, the restorationist force of the slave-owners in the State of Ch'in dismembered Shang Yang by tying his limbs to chariots driven in different directions and killed his whole family.

Although Shang Yang was killed, the State of Ch'in continued to implement the political line of the Legalist school. In the sphere of ideology, the theoretician and thinker of the Legalist school Hsun Kuang was the chief representative in this struggle against restoration.

Taking the stand of the new emerging landlord class, Hsun Kuang defended Shang Yang's reforms. He toured the State of Ch'in to make on-the-spot enquiries into the life of the people, their political leanings and the rule of law exercised by that regime at various levels .He concluded that the State of Ch'in was approaching "the height

of order". He described Mencius' talk for attacking Shang Yang's reforms and restoring the slave system as "evil talk" and "heresy" and pointed out that Mencius was spreading "evil talk" and "heresy" with the aim of creating trouble in places under the rule of the new emerging landlord class in order to restore the slave system.

Both Confucius and Mencius regarded the "mandate of heaven" as the basis of the slave-owning class' power to rule. They also asserted that all earthly things(such as wealth and position, poverty and degradation, weal and woe, good and bad fortune) were decided by the "mandate of heaven". Mencius even asserted that the "great mission" of restoring slavery which he intended to fulfill has also fallen from heaven on him.

Hsun Kung criticized this Confucian concept and held that "heaven follows a regular course" and "heaven is governed by certain rules". To him, heaven was nature whose movement was governed by certain objective laws and was not necessarily linked with such earthly things as wealth, and position, poverty and degradation, weal and woe, good and bad fortune. He cited numerous facts to explode the myth that man's destiny was preordained by "heaven" and similar superstitions peddled by the Confucian school. The motions of the celestial bodies and of the changes of the four seasons, he said, "were the same in the times of Yu and Chieh; but Yu could bring order to the country whereas Chieh had brought disorder, and so it is clear that neither order nor disorder is caused by heaven"(Yu and Chieh were two rulers of the ancient Hsia Dynasty in China; the former was the founder of the dynasty and the latter led to its ruin. See Chin Yun-ko's article). While criticizing the Confucian fallacy that the power to rule was "bestowed by heaven", Hsun Kuang set forth the materialist principle of the need to "tell the difference between heaven and man", separating natural "heaven" from the social "being".

Hsun Kuang not only opposed the concept of the "mandate of heaven", but went a step further by putting forward the stand of "conquering heaven". In his *On Heaven*, a treatise written in the spirit of going against the tide, he maintained that changes in nature had nothing to do with social politics. He further pointed out: Changes in the elements were natural phenomena and not to be afraid of; man would surely conquer nature(See 'Han Fei—An Outstanding Exponent of Pre-Chin Dynasty Legalist Ideas' by the Workers'

Theoretical Group of the Peking Trade Union Council and the Chinese Language and Literature Department of Peking Teachers' University in *Peking Review* No.46, November 15, 1974). He said: "Why not make use of heaven by mastering its law, instead of bowing to it and singing its praise!" It was indeed astounding for him to set forth such a materialist viewpoint more than 2000 years ago. Hsun Kuang's simple materialist approach to knowing and conquering nature(in fact, knowing itself is conquering) was beyond all other philosophers in the Warring States Period.

The Confucianists stood by the declining slave-owners; hence there is no surprise in their maintaining that "the present is not as good as the past". Confucius regarded the rule of the slave-owning class in the Western Chou Dynasty as the "millennium" and described the Spring and Autumn Period he lived in as an age "lacking in right principles throughout the country". Mencius, on his part, regarded the Warring States Period he lived in as the time in which "the world is on the decline and has no principles"(Chin Yun-ko, p.15). Thus to the Confuciansts, the rule of law by the new landlord class was worse than the rule of "rites" by the slave-owning class.

The Legalists, on the other hand, held that the present was better than the past and the near-ancient times were better than hoary antiquity. They opined that society was moving ahead continuously and each generation was better than the previous one. Hsun Kuang was of the opinion that the State of Ch'in which had put the rule of law on a firm basis surpassed all previous dynasties and that the kings of the landlord class surpassed the ancient kings of the slave-owning class. Basing himself on the view that society was advancing continuously, Hsun Kuang countered the Confucianists by putting forward the political slogan "Follow the contemporary kings". What he meant was that the various ducal states should follow the example of the State of Ch'in and firmly establish the dictatorship of the new emerging landlord class. Although their ideas served as the theoretical basis for actual reforms at that time, both Shang Yang and Hsun Kuang failed to produce sufficient arguments to support these ideas when these were being propagated.

Han Fei and his Legalist Ideas

Han Fei(280-233 BC), a native of the State of Han in the later years

of the Warring States Period, was a disciple of Hsun Kuang. He summed up and improved upon the thinking of the earlier Legalists and established the ideological system of the Legalist school. Thus he became the chief exponent of the Legalist thought before the Ch'in Dynasty. His theories provided a powerful theoretical basis for the establishment of a unified feudal state under a central authority. His 55 articles were compiled and given the shape of a book entitled *Han Fei Tzu*.

Han Fei proceeded from the viewpoint of the evolution of history and the utilitarianism of the rising landlord class and explained the facts about the struggle between man and nature and between human beings. He stood firmly for "not counting on learning from the ancient ways" and "toppling the conventional rules and regulations". History, as he held, was advancing and contemporary time was more progressive than ancient times. Since time shad changed, different methods had to be used to resolve problems. All this meant more than "learning from the contemporary kings". Han Fei caustically satirized as blockheads those who stressed the past more than the present and followed the beaten track. He said: Working in the fields one day, somebody in the State of Sung saw a hare dash head-on against a tree stump and break its neck. He laid down his tool and stood by the tree stump waiting for more hares to dash themselves against it. But far from there being any more dead hares, he made himself a laughing stock. Using this story as an illustration, Han Fei pointed out that those bent on ruling contemporary people with politics of the ancient kings were one and the same with that fellow(See article on Han Fei).

Han Fei also sharply criticized the Confucian concept of morality. When Shang Yang who was making reforms in the State of Ch'in resorted to revolutionary violence and became successful, one Confucian scholar named Chao Liang cursed him, saying: "He who relies on virtue will thrive and he who relies on force will perish". Nevertheless, Shang Yang persisted in carrying out reforms, but was unable to give Confucianists a fitting theoretical reply. That reply was given by Han Fei. He repudiated the Confucian ethics like "benevolence, righteousness, favour and love" lock, stock and barrel and said: All the talk about benevolence and righteousness, favour and love is tantamount to rewarding those who have done no

meritorious deeds and letting those who have committed crimes go scot-free. Who then will fight to the last in the battlefield and exert himself in production for the state? He asserted that Confucian way should not be followed as regards what should be rewarded and what should be punished; otherwise, the rule of law could not be enforced. To defend his view, he put forward two examples:

One was a young man in the State of Chu who informed on his father for stealing sheep. In fact, he should have been rewarded, but the Chu officials concerned did the opposite and convicted him on the ground that he was not filial. This being the case, Han Fei said, nobody would bother to inform on criminals. The other example was that of a soldier in the State of Lu who deserted in all three battles he had fought in. When asked why he did so, he said he was afraid that if he died on the battlefield, no one would support his old father at home. Hearing this, Confucius considered the soldier filial and obedient and recommended he be made an official. In Han Fei's view, such a way of doing things would deter people from fighting the enemy heroically. What, then, one may ask, was the use of benevolence, righteousness and virtue? For no one would inform on any offender or rise in resistance against any invading army. Han Fei, like his predecessors, was in favour of heavy punishments for what were crimes in the eyes of the rulers. He states: "Severe penalties are what the people fear, heavy punishments are what the people hate. Accordingly the sage promulgates what they fear in order to forbid the practice of wickedness and establishes what they hate in order to prevent villainous acts. Thus the State is safe and no outrage can occur. From this I know well that benevolence, righteousness, love and favour are not worth adopting, while severe punishment and heavy penalties can maintain the State in order". It is clearly anti-Confucian.

What moral standard did Han Fei put forward? It was working hard in production and performing military deeds. In short, it meant relying on "force".

Political Programme of Han Fei

Unlike the earlier Legalists, Han Fei advanced a more comprehensive political programme to consolidate the position of the new landlord class.

First, he advocated the idea of centralized power—"Work is done in the various localities, but power lies with the central authorities; as the ruler wields power, the localities must act on his orders". Han Fei asserted that without uprooting the ducal states system, the slave-owning aristocrats' political privileges could not be smashed and landlords' authority established in its place. He for the first time advanced the idea of the rule of law combining "law, strategy and authority". It was necessary to replace the "rule of rites" with the "rule of law" and use the decrees aimed at strengthening the landlords' regime to guarantee the exercise of centralized power. To achieve this, the ruler must also master "strategy", which meant tactics for engaging in political struggles, including the methods and measures of appointment and dismissal, examinations, rewards and punishment for officials at all levels. Only when the ruler mastered "strategy" could he make his subordinates do his bidding and prevent them from "engaging in conspiracy and seeking self-interest". That should be followed by the strengthening the authority of centralized power. Needless to state, the combination of "law, strategy and authority" contained the element of suppressing the toiling poor; however, according to the Workers' Group cited above, under the circumstances, at that time it helped more effectively to the timely and firm suppression of their restorationist activities.

Han Fei also laid down organizational line for reform. Confucian scholars, who did not till the land and enlist in the army, should not be given important official posts. To debar them from forming cliques for their own selfish interests, seeking gain by trickery and chasing after high positions and handsome salaries, it was essential to prevent agents of the slave-owning aristocrats in one disguise or another from sneaking into the landlords' regime.

Han Fei also stood against giving out official appointments to those who talked nicely but were actually incompetent. Anyone who was low-bred but had the ability to make the state rich and the army strong, he held, should be given an important post. On the other hand, good-for-nothing fellows should not be assigned to such posts no matter how high their social status or reputation was. This organizational line was necessary for the successful implementation of the broad pro-feudal state policy. It is pertinent to point out that when Shang Yang was making reforms, there were new organizational

forms for local political power down to the grass-roots institutions, but he did not lay down a clear line for appointing officials at suitable posts from the grass-roots up to the top level. Han Fei outstripped Shang Yang in this respect, for he paid particular attention to naming candidates to be prime minister and generals.

Second, Han Fei further developed the Legalists' traditional policy of "farm production and military strength". Before him, Li Kuei(455-395 BC) set great store by "farm production", while Wu Chi(?-381 BC) emphasized the importance of military strength. Later Shang Yang put equal stress on both. Thus Han Fei inherited a lot from his predecessors. However, he added more to the Legalist thinking. He denounced as "five worms" the Confucian scholars who deceived people by peddling the "way of ancient kings", politicians who depended on their oily tongues for their living and engaged in jobbery, roaming swordsmen and assassins who violated the state's injunctions, loafers who did not take part in production and serve in the army, and profiteers who amassed fortunes by speculative activities. These were the "five worms" which were dregs of the old society dependent on the slave-owning aristocrats and were impediments to the development of the new. Thus Han Fei improved upon the idea about "farm production" and military strength" of Li Kuei, Wu Chi and Shang Yang and formulated a policy for Ch'in Shih Huang to unify China and consolidate the political power of the rising landlord class.

Third, Han Fei elaborated on the views of Shang Yang and Hsun Kuang and stood for a revolutionary dictatorship of the rising landlord class over the slave-owning class in the ideological sphere.

As this chapter is drawn to a close, it is pertinent to point out that Han Fei fairly systematically summed up the theory and practice of the Legalists who had lived before the Ch'in Dynasty and criticized the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, in the course of which a more comprehensive ideological system and line of the Legalist school took shape. Han Fei lived in the thick of the restoration and counter restoration struggle between the two classes and was more sober-minded than the earlier Legalists in perceiving the importance of strengthening the newly emerging authority of the landlord class under a centralized power. This was an important reason for his being able to put forward a more comprehensive Legalist political

programme than that of his predecessors. The situation in which "a hundred schools of thought contend" had come into being long before Han Fei's time. And the Legalist school, by degrees, worked out its own new ideological system in the course of its theoretical struggle against the Confucian school. This was another important reason why Han Fei was able to set forth a more comprehensive Legalist ideological line than that of his predecessors.

CHAPTER : 8

First Feudal Empire in China: Ch'in Dynasty (221 BC-206 BC)

China has the longest and uninterrupted historical tradition in the history of the world spanning thousands of years. It is characterized by reigns of great ruling/imperial dynasties that endured for centuries—the Hsia for four centuries; the Shang for six centuries; the Chou for nearly nine centuries; the Han for over four centuries; and Tang, Sung, Ming and Ching(Manchu) for some three centuries each. In comparison, the Ch'in survived for merely fifteen years. Yet it could make a really great, if not the greatest, impact. Why was this so?

The main reason is that the coming of the Chin dynasty to power in 221 BC signified the establishment of the first feudal empire in China. Feudal elements made their emergence in China during the late *Spring and Autumn Period* (771-475 BC) — a period marked by the decline of the slave-owning aristocracy, growing social unrest leading to slave uprisings, the conquest of small states by big ones and the appearance—even in an embryonic form—of feudal elements in some pockets. By the beginning of the *Warring States Period* (475 BC-221 BC), there was an advanced mode of production—the feudal mode, giving rise to economic progress and a new social class—the feudal class emerged. In different parts of the country, feudal states appeared, many of which were gobbled up by a few. It was a period of transition from a feudal kingdom with independent ducal states to a unified empire with centralized power, during which the remnants of the slave system were being further destroyed and the feudal system was being established and developed all over the country. Chin Shi Huang-ti, the first emperor of China, brought about the political unification of large parts of China on a feudal basis by defeating the other six powerful rival states e.g, Han, Zhao, Wei, Chu, Yan and Chi/Qi. The Ch'in dynasty had been in power for only fifteen years;

however, its importance should not be adjudged by this very brief time span during which two of its rulers ruled.

Political History

It was during that period that the *ching tien*(nine squares) land system of the slave society was gradually disintegrating. Large numbers of slaves became serfs or peasants and their interest in production was raised to some extent. Iron farm tools and oxen were used on a wide scale in cultivating the land. Large tracts of barren land were brought under the plough and forests were cleared to expand the agricultural land. A feudal economy was slowly but imperceptibly developing. The monopoly of the slave-owning aristocracy in handicrafts and commerce was being broken by degrees. Folk handicrafts and commerce prospered to some extent. However, the existing barriers between independent ducal states hindered further progress of the social economy. The different states had different systems of currency and weights and measures, and their defensive barricades and customs hampered the flow of goods. The regular fights among states year after year undermined farming to a large extent. It was quite obvious that if the continual fighting among independent ducal regimes were not brought to an end, if the country was not unified and activities towards restoration of the remnant forces of slave-owners were not countered and the remnants of slave were not swept away, there could hardly be any further progress of the rising feudal economy.

The Legalists spoke for the interest of the rising landlord class and advocated the setting up of a unified feudal set-up with centralized power. This reflected the historical need of the times and conformed to the wishes of the people.

Who could accomplish this historical task? Of the then existing seven main ducal states, the six states of Chi, Chu, Yen, Han, Chao and Wei east of the Hankukuan Pass(in today's northeastern part of Lingpao county in Honan province) had not carried out thoroughgoing reforms in moving from the slave system to the feudal system and still retained many vestiges of the slave system. Politically also, these states were weak and corrupt. The situation in the State of Ch'in was quite different. Spurred on by slave uprisings in the middle of the Warring States Period, Duke Hsiao of Ch'in employed the Legalist Shang Yang (390-338 BC) to make reforms. Feudal political and

economic systems were set up which resulted in the steady growth of its economic and military strength. Thus by the time of Ch'in Shi Huang, the State of Ch'in had already seven rulers over a period of more than 100 years. Compared with the other six ducal states, Ch'in was more progressive politically, ideologically, economically and militarily. Its boundary had expanded from what is now Shensi and the southeastern part of Kansu to present-day Shansi, the western parts of Honan and Hopeh, and Szechuan. Conditions were ripe for the unification of China under Shi Hunag-ti by destroying the restoration efforts of the remnant forcers of the slave-owners and wiping out the independent ducal states. All these steps helped consolidate and develop the feudal system.

Thus, it was the process of annexation that contributed to the process of political unification. This process had two distinct stages. The first stage witnessed partial unification with seven big states gobbling up many small states. The second stage was marked by wars of annexation among the "Powerful Seven" themselves and the unification of the country under the Ch'in. The appearance of this large empire signified a historic victory for the new landlord class.

The Chinese situation had some resemblance with the situation in the Indian sub-continent during the 6th century BC, which was marked by the rise of the "Sixteen *Mahajanapadas*"(large territories) and many small *janapadas*, when in the first stage of political unification, Magadha and Kosala annexed most of the other *janapadas* and in the second, Magadha–located in Eastern India–came out victorious and established a universal monarchy. There, however, was one fundamental difference between the two; while in China, it led to the unification of China under the first feudal empire under the Chin, in India, it led to the formation of the first centralized monarchy which had elements of slavery, but had nothing to do with feudalism.

To start with, Ch'in was a small state in the western reaches of the Wei River. Like all other states during the Warring States Period, the Chin pursued an aggressive policy of territorial expansion. This state, however, enjoyed one advantage which the others lacked. They had adopted a new style of government based on the principles of the Legalist School of Thought—one of the Hundred Schools of Thought—a period of remarkable cultural blossoming in ancient

China. It sought to establish one uniform legal system throughout the country. To establish it in such a vast country like China tormented by civil war and almost unending bloodshed would require the application of sufficient force in a brutal manner. The Legalist philosophy also demanded a strong central government, a strong military force, a tightly controlled economy and the strict regimentation of the people. In fact, there must have been a feeling in the country that bloodshed must come to a stop and it is that social and political need that impelled Ch'in Shi Huang-ti (259-210 BC) to work for the unification of China. There is hardly any surprise in the fact that the name of the country 'China' was derived from the name of the Ch'in.

Traditionally, one can date the beginning of the Ch'in dynasty (not the Ch'in state/territory which goes back to 897 BC?) to 256 BC, although China's political unification under the Ch'in dynasty became a reality only in 221 BC. Like Chu in the south, Ch'in (Qin) in the far north-west was peripheral to the 'central states' and was always disparaged by them as non-Hsia. Then it expanded into the valley of the River Wei which was once the nerve-centre of Western Chou; however, its roots lay further west and its population, as John Keay holds, included large numbers of pastoral Rong. Problems of integration and defence kept Ch'in on the sidelines until Shang Yang—the minister of Ch'in from 356 BC—was able to convince Ch'in's duke in a programme of radical restructuring. In fact, Ch'I's rise from a petty state began with the arrival of Shang Yang and it took a little less than a century and a half to overcome her numerous rivals.

By 256 BC, the Ch'in had become the most powerful state in China. The personal name of Shi Huang-ti was Ying Cheng who became the ruler of the Ch'in state in 246 BC at the age of thirteen. He not only gave high official posts to the Legalists but actively put their ideas into practice. Encouraged and helped by legalists Han Fei (c.280-233 BC), Li Ssu (?-208 BC) and wEi Liao, he formulated his political and military lines and succeeded in leading the war that wiped out the six ducal states and unified China.

Han Fei had inherited most of the Legalist ideas and was an outstanding exponent of the Legalist school. When his writings reached the State of Ch'in, Ch'in Shi Huang read them and said with

emotion: "If I could meet the author and make friends with him, I would die without regret" (For details, see Chin Chung's 'Chin Shih Huang—The First Ruler to Unify China' in *Peking Review* No.50, December 13, 1974). Han Fei represented progressive ideas during that time and stood for reforms. He advocated the elimination of "private schools" and the substitution of the Legalist theory for the theories of various other schools. With regard to law, he held that law should not be prejudiced in favour of the aristocrats and that ministers should be punished for violating the law while ordinary people should be rewarded if they performed any meritorious service for the state. He boldly put forward the policy of promoting those with talent from the grass-roots level to take important posts as officials or generals, and he stressed the establishment of a feudal country with centralized power. All this had a great impact on Chin Shih Huang.

Li Ssu was Chin Shih Huang's right-hand man in carrying out the Legalist line. He strongly advocated the policy of seizing the opportunity to make a clean sweep of the aristocrats' rule in the other six states and unify the country. He advised the emperor not to expel all the political and military personnel who had come to Ch'in from those six states, but make an analysis as to their real character. This helped Chin Shih Huang employ more political and military personnel of the landlord class from outside Ch'in, thereby expanding its influence. Li Ssu himself was appointed *ting wei*, the highest judicial magistrate, and was later promoted to be Ch'in's prime minister. In working out the strategy for unifying the country, Li Ssu again made the important proposal of "destroying the enemy forces one by one". He thus contributed to Ch'in Shih Huang's cause of unifying China.

Wei Liao who was well versed in military treatises, strategy and tactics was appointed supreme commander of the army by Ch'in shih Huang. He also made great contribution to the war that unified China.

The first state to fall was Han (sometimes called Hann to distinguish it from the Han of the Han dynasty) in 230 BC. He then took advantage of a natural disaster — the 229 BC earthquake in the Zhao territory to invade and conquer it. Incidentally, it was in Zhao that Shi Huang-ti was born. By capturing Zhao, he could avenge a personal humiliation he was subjected to when he was a child hostage

there and killed his enemies. Chin armies conquered the state of Zhao in 228 BC, the northern country of Yan in 226 BC, the small state of Wei in 225 BC and the largest and the greatest challenge, Chu, in 223 BC. In 222 BC, the last remnants of Yan and the royal family were captured in Liaotung in the north-east. The only country now left unconquered was the state of Chi/Qi in the far eastern side which is now the Shantung peninsula. Terrified, the young king of Chi sent three lakh troops to defend his western borders. Cheng deceived them and in 221 BC, attacked them from the northern side from which they did not expect any major attack at all. Thus Chi fell to Chin and the subjugation of the north was more or less complete.

For the first time, large parts of China came to be politically unified large parts of China under Ying Cheng—a role played in India by Chandragupta Maurya, although in a totally different socio-economic context. In the same year, he proclaimed himself the First Emperor (Shi Huang-ti) and decreed that his successors be titled the Second Emperor, the Third Emperor and so on. It appears that he held the hope that the Chin empire would be passed on in this way for ever. In the south, military expansion continued during his reign with the annexation of various regions. In a major campaign during 221-214, the emperor conquered the region of Fukien, Kwantung, Kwangsi and Tongking. This was achieved largely by the digging of a twenty-mile waterway called "the marvellous canal" which connects two streams and thus made possible water transportation all the way from the Yangtze to the West River.

Immediately after assuming office as the First Emperor, Shu Huang-ti declared that Ch'in 'ruled by the power of water'. This actually was a reference to the 'Five Phases' (or sometimes 'Five Powers' or 'Five Elements'), whose sequential ascendancy, according to the Taoist thinking, controlled the course of history. While Confucians attributed dynastic power to the Mandate of Heaven, others of a less orthodox persuasion (the Taoist) attributed it one of the five elemental Phases/Elements—earth, wood, metal, fire and water. These phases, in the opinion of the Taoist school, rotated in an endless cycle based on the idea that each overcame its predecessor; thus wood floated on water, metal felled wood, fire melted metal, water quenched fire, earth dammed water, and thus it went on. The logic was that since the Chou had apparently upheld fire, Ch'in must

adopt what overcame it; in this way, as Shiji says, 'the power of water now began its period of dominance'.

Causes behind Ch'in success

How could such a reign surviving possibly for the briefest period, attain such a great success has been a subject of lively discussion among historians. All agreed that Ch'in's isolated position in the far western periphery was a potent factor. Jia Yi (198-156 BC) in an essay captioned 'Discussions on the Faults of Ch'in' makes this point: "The territory of Ch'in was protected by mountains and girlded by the Yellow River; this is what gave it strength. It was a state that had barriers on four sides..." (See Bodde, p.6). The same view was expressed by the Legalist philosopher Xun Zi in his description of the state after a visit to Ch'in in 264 BC: "Its frontier defences are precipitious, its geographical configurations are advantageous, its mountains, forests, streams and valleys are excellent, and its natural resources are abundant. Thus in its geographical configuration it is excellent" (Bodde, p.9).

This geographical location was undoubtedly a military advantage to the Ch'in. However, it had other important consequences also. Ch'in's proximity to the 'barbarian' peoples of the north and the west kept their military machine constantly on their toes and concentrated her attention on military affairs rather than the cultural and philosophical affairs that so much attracted the attention of the central states. It is suggested that the comparative lack of association with and deference to the historical and cultural traditions and values on the part of the people.

The period of the Eastern Chou or more precisely the 'Warring States Period' was one of unending hopeless division, dissension and warfare that engulfed the country. However, it was also a period of great cultural blossoming—the period of the Hundred Schools of Thought—that produced Confucian philosophy, Taoism, Mohism, Legalism and many other schools of thought that contended among themselves. The Legalist school met one very important social and political need of the time that could not be met by any other. It advocated one uniform legal code throughout the country that would politically unify China by getting rid of disunity and anarchy. The Ch'in rulers stood up to the needs of the time like no other. This is the key factor that explains its success.

Administrative divisions

A big controversy centring on 'whither Ch'in Dynasty" arose after the unification of China. The main focus of the struggle was whether to establish the prefecture and county system with centralized power or to restore the ducal states system of the slave-owning class. Its essence was a struggle between the two lines—one of which persisted in progress and unification and the other stood for restoration, retrogression and split.

In this big controversy, the side headed by Prime Minister Wang Wan, proceeded from the standpoint of the slave-owning aristocrats and advocated following the Yin/Shang and Chou Dynasties in decreeing members of the royal families to be dukes of independent states. On the other hand, Legalist Li Ssu opposed the system of ducal states and was firm in defending the interests of the rising landowning class. He pointed out that the system of installing hereditary nobles to rule their domains was the root cause of continuous warfare between the dukes, and he stood for the establishment of the prefecture and county system with centralized power. Having drawn a lesson from the past "sufferings of the people in the country" due to the never-ending wars between different states, Ch'in Shih Huang adopted Li Ssu's proposal and pushed ahead with the prefecture and county system.

With the help of his prime minister, Li Ssu, Shi Huang-ti set to work to establish his house for ten thousand generations. He set up the first centralized empire by adopting a ruthless policy of authoritarian control. Such control was not unnatural for a person who was bent upon building up a unified political empire out of political turmoil. The administrative system that he set up extended from the central to the local levels.

First of all, he abolished throughout the country the system of "hereditary official posts and emoluments" and of "parceling out the land and installing hereditary nobles" — a system left over from the slave society. This was an important plank of the pre-Ch'in Legalists and an indication of the establishment of a centralized autocratic state.

In the central government, the administrative structure of three *kung* and nine *ching* was set up. The emperor selected those with talent and merit to be *kung* and *ching*. The three *kung* were the *cheng*

hsiang (prime minister), *tai wei* (marshal in charge of military affairs) and *yu shi ta fu*(supervisor of officials of all ranks). Both the right and left-hand *cheng hsiang* were the supreme officials of the central administrative organ who helped the emperor handle important state affairs. The *tai wei* was the central military commander who helped the emperor in military affairs. The *yu shi ta fu* helped the emperor supervise the administration of all officials. The nine *ching* were in charge of the work in the imperial ancestral temple, the court attendants and guards, horses and chariots, jurisdiction, protocol, finances, officially run handicrafts and other affairs.

The prefecture and county system was enforced in local government. The whole country was divided into 36 prefectures and the number grew to over 40 towards the end of the Ch'in Dynasty. Every prefecture was governed by a *chun shou* (magistrate) directly under the central government. There were also the *chun wei* in charge of prefectural military affairs and the *chien yu shih* in charge of censorship and law enforcement in the prefecture. Each prefecture consisted of several counties where the *hsien ling*(county head) ruled, with the *hsien wei* looking for military affairs and the *hsien cheng* in charge of jurisdiction. All the major officials in the local government were appointed or removed by the emperor, and no post was hereditary. This was an important reform. National military affairs were run by the emperor himself who also issued laws and decrees.

Thus an autocratic system of centralized power took shape. Its establishment was of major significance in consolidating a multi-national unified country and in developing feudal economy and culture. However, as Bai Shouyi (p.125) points out, records available till now give no details on the extent to which the prefecture-county system was actually carried out during the reign of Shih Huang-ti. However, there is no doubt that the Chin dictatorship had a great impact on the feudal society of China and every subsequent dynasty followed the Chin example without basic changes.

Feudal ownership of Land enforced across the Country

In 216 BC, Ch'in Shi Huang promulgated a decree directing all landlords and peasants to report the size of their holdings to the government and pay taxes accordingly, after which the government would recognize their land ownership as legal. This was a progressive

measure in extending the feudal ownership of land and wiping out the remnants of the system of land ownership under slavery.

Building Water Conservancy Works to Develop Agriculture

Contrary to the Confucianists, the Legalists always stressed farming and military affairs. Ch'in Shih Huang put the Legalist policy into practice in these fields. Before the unification of China, Ch'in Shih Huang had built the 150-kilometre-long Chengkuo Canal in Kuanchung(now Shensi) which was important to irrigation. The *Historical Records* said: "Fields in Kuanchung were fertile and there were no lean years. This is why Ch'in became rich and powerful. After unification, Ch'in shih Huang built the 35-kilometre-long Lingchu Canal(in the northern part of present-day Kwangsi) linking the Yangtze River System with the Pearl River System. These water conservancy projects played a big part in the political, military, economic and cultural fields as also in the development of agriculture.

Standardization of Chinese Script

At a time when China was politically disunited and each state reigned supreme, each state had its own script of writing. In the course of the 1st millennium BC, the 'Large Seal' script of the Shang and Chou had acquired local characteristics in the various 'warring states'. Moreover, in states outside the 'central plain', such as Shu and Chu, some fragments of pictography—still un-deciphered—suggest a regional challenge from unrelated writing systems. Upon the unification of China, the Chin government under Prime Minister Li Ssu promoted the Small Script, a simpler form that had fewer strokes for Chinese characters, as the standard for official writing across China. It involved eradicating obsolete or offensive characters, simplifying and rationalizing others, and standardizing each and every one. The *Qian Han Shu* (History of the Former Han Dynasty) written early in the Christian era, describes in detail the system of writing in early China and the changes instituted under the Ch'in. These comments were further clarified and amplified in one of the more important surviving dictionaries of early China, the *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*, written about 100 AD by Xu Shen:

When Ch'in Shihuang first unified the world his Grand Councillor, Li Si, made it uniform according to the standards of the

Ch'in, and did away with those characters which were not in accord with the Ch'in writing. Li Si made the *Cang Jie Pian*, *Zhao Gao*, Keeper of the Chariots, made the *Yuan Li Pian* and the *Bo Xue Pian*. They all took from the large seal of the Historian Zhou, but in some cases considerably simplified and modified it. This is what is called the small Seal...(See Edmund Capon, *Qin Shihuang Terracotta Warriors and Horses*, p.26).

In fact, the 'Small Seal' script established the principle of a written language that was common to the literate elite throughout the empire regardless of spoken dialects. It was since then recognized as a medium of both government and scholarship. These measures undoubtedly were of great significance. As John Keay observes, it helped in subsuming regional distinctions, although social distinctions, particularly those between the lettered classes and the unlettered, had always been there. It also signifies a marker of the continuity of the Chinese civilization.

Unifying the Currency and Weights and Measures

After unification, Ch'in discarded the old currencies of the six ducal states and used one standard currency instead. This consisted of two categories, the higher being gold, the lower round coins which had been in circulation in the Ch'in state. It is commonly believed that in 221 BC, at the time of unification, Ch'in introduced the Pan Liang coinage, discontinuing the knife and spade coinage. This, however, is, according to some scholars, certain as they think that the coinage of that period is more complex and the knife and spade coinage was phased out gradually. It is suggested that some 'Square-Foot Spades' and early 'Square-Holed Round Coins' were cast under the Ch'in. The weights and measures of the whole country were standardized in 221 BC. Because of the differences in currency and weights and measures in the past, the slave owners engaged in handicrafts and commerce took advantage to make trouble. Unification put an end to their speculative activity and was a heavy blow to these slave-owners and favourable to the consolidation of political power of the rising landlord class. Moreover, these measures created conditions for unifying the tax system and the pay system of the officials, and proved to be a positive factor in the exchange of commodities between the laboring people, development of culture and in the economic interflow within the country.

Communication network

The primary preconditions for the political unification of the country were to put an end to the barriers preventing the political unification of the country and the construction of a well-organized communication system. After unification, Ch'in Shi Huang ordered the destruction of all customs barriers, barricades and strongholds on the borders of the former six ducal tstaes and standardized the gauge cart wheels to facilitate communications and transport. The following year roads were built on a large scale, and this facilitated relaying government orders to the whole country, exchanging goods and moving troops. It was of significance in consolidating national unification.

Two broad highways with trees planted on both sides, called "imperial chariot roads" were constructed with Xianying, the capital as centre, one moving towards the east through Hebei and Shantung provinces to the seacoast, while the other stretching towards the south to Kiangsu and Chekiang provinces. Roads were also built connecting provinces such as Hunan, Kiangsi, Kwangtung and Kwangsi as also in remote areas like Yunnan and Kweichow. Other parts were also connected by road links. Apart from roads, Shi Huang-ti also built Lingqu Canal, dug in the north-east part of modern Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region to connect the Lijiang and Jiangjiang rivers and serve as a passage between the Changjiang and Zhujiang river systems.

The Great Wall of China

The greatest enemy of the Ch'in was to the north. Called Hsiung Nu, these nomadic people, broadly known also as the Huns, had been making unending inroads into the northern territories during the Chou period. These northern people originally developed as hunters and fishermen; but when the region started drying out and the forests receded, they turned to keeping flocks. As a result, they learnt how to make the best use of the horses, and wandered as nomads and fought among themselves. This experience of constant fighting made them highly skilled in fighting on horseback, and when they began to wander into the northern states of China, they made extremely formidable opponents for the infantry-based northern states.

To subdue them, Shi Huang-ti sent his trusted general Meng T'ien

with 300,000 men, who, after successful conclusion of a campaign that drove the nomads out of the north and beyond the Yellow River loop, put his men to work constructing frontier fortifications to guard the newly-won territory. The work was not completely done from the scratch. Most authorities agree that Meng Tien did not build an entirely new wall, but rather worked with pre-existing Warring States wall—raised by the states of Ch'in, Zhao, Yan and others—which he repaired and connected. Nevertheless, the consensus is that this was an awesome feat. *The Cambridge History of China*, for example, speaks of "the colossal nature of the wall". Many scholars point out that the Ch'in wall was, in many respects, far more complex even than "building a pyramid, dam or other stationary monumental structure" as one had to reckon with "the long stretches of mountains and semi-desert it traversed, the sparse population of those areas, and the frigid winter climate" (See Derk Bodde's article, 'The State and Empire of Ch'in' in *The Cambridge History of China* ed Denis Twichet & Michael Lowe). Another scholar, Arthur Waldron in his work, *The Great Wall of China From History to Myth*, however, argues, on the basis of such primary sources as *Shih Chi* and *Han Shu* that opinions such as these seem to reflect not so much hard evidence as they do a general fascination with the First Emperor. In fact, the vast wall system visible today was mainly built by the Chinese Ming dynasty in the 16th century. In a fresh interpretation, Waldron has demonstrated how the Ming wall building, though of little military value for keeping out the non-Chinese nomads to the north, resulted from the officials' inability to decide on any better course, either to attack or to trade.

It is well-known that the wall has been periodically rebuilt and modified throughout history by each reigning Chinese dynasty in accordance with the changing political and strategic needs of the times. The wall stretched nearly 3000 miles, extending from Kansu, in the west, to the Yellow Sea, in the east. Ancient records report that at least one million slaves and prisoners of war were used to create this defensive wall. Many labourers died from exhaustion and starvation while working on this colossal task, their bodies added to the rubble and masonry as the quickest means of disposal. For centuries, the Wall was known as "the longest cemetery in the world." In one sense, the Great Wall served as the boundary between the

agricultural civilization of China and the civilization of the nomadic tribes of the north and north-west".

The Great Wall is one of the longest surviving structures of the world. Naturally it has baffled scientists for generations. Recently scientists claim to have discovered the secret behind the strength and longevity of the Great Wall—sticky rice. A team at Zhejiang University in China has found that the delicious "sweet rice" that is a mainstay of modern Asian cuisine was also a key ingredient in the mortar used to build the Great Wall. Their study also found that construction workers in ancient china mixed sticky rice soup with slaked lime and limestone to create a paste ideal for filling in gaps between bricks and stone-blocks. The super strong mortar—a kind of special organic-inorganic composite material—was used to build the Great Wall, as well as quake-proof tombs, pagodas and city walls, some of which still exist today (*Hindustan Times*, Kolkata 01-6-10).

In order to consolidate his new reign Shi Huang-ti had all the arms and weapons held by the people collected and destroyed. He sent into exile some of the former nobles and wealthy gentry of the six conquered states to frontier regions, and forced others to reside in the capital, Xianyang ostensibly to keep them under surveillance.

Burning of Books and the Burial of Scholars

The struggle between restoration and counter-restoration raged even after the establishment of he Ch'in Dynasty. The historically famous incident "burning of books and burying Confucian scholars alive" was a manifestation of this sharp struggle(For details, see the article captioned "Clarifying 'Burning Books and Burying Confucian Scholars Alive" in *Peking Review*, No.19, 1974).

According to the Records of the Grand Historian, after Shi Huang-ti unified China, Li Ssu suggested suppressing all thoughts and political opinions. Such a drastic step was justified by accusations that the intelligentsia sang false praise and raised dissent through libel. The result was that from early 213 BC, all classic works of the Hundred Schools of Thought, except those from Li Ssu's own school of philosophy known as Legalism, were subject to book-burning. Huang, according to the Records, burnt all other histories out of fear that they undermined his legitimacy and wrote his own history books. Later, Li Ssu took his place in this area.

This conventional view has been opposed and the matter explained in a different light by others. Chin Chung argues in his article('Chin Shih Huang—The First Ruler to Unify China' in *Peking Review* No.50, December 13, 1974) that the incident—a bit exaggerated—was the product of class struggle of those times. He provides us with the background of how it all started. In 213 BC, the Confucian scholar Chunyu Yueh, a royal academician, started the controversy when Chin Shih Huang was giving a big feast for his ministers. He accused and attacked the emperor in his presence for enforcing the Legalist line which, he alleged, was "doing things without following the ancient way" and so would be short-lived. Chunyu Yueh eulogized instead the "over one-thousand-year reign of the Yin and Chou Dynasties" and advocated the enfeoffment of the members of the royal families and meritorious officials and the restoration of the slave system of the Yin and Chou Dynasties.

Li Ssu on the contrary emphasized that every era should have its own political system and this was an inevitable outcome of the changes of the times; if one follows the old way without any changes and go back to the old order, then that would lead one nowhere. Moreover, he exposed the Confucian scholars' activities of forming cliques and spreading rumours in attacking the new system under the cloak of running "private schools".

Li Ssu proposed that all histories in the imperial archives excepting those written by the Ch'in historians be burnt; that the *Classic of Poetry*, the *Classic Book of History* and works by scholars of different schools be handed over to the local authorities for burning; that anyone discussing these two particular books be executed; that those using ancient examples to sanitize contemporary politics be put to death along with their families, that authorities who failed to report cases that came to their attention were to be regarded as equally guilty; and that those who had not burnt the listed books within 30 days of the decrees were to be banished to the north as convicts working on building of the Great Wall. The books to be spared in the destruction were books on medicine, pharmacology, agriculture, divination and forestry as also books collected by royal academicians or entrusted to their care. According to Chin Chung, the emperor did this so that "those under the sun would not attack the present with the past". This was the "burning of books" incident.

Burning books was a heavy blow to those Confucian scholars who persisted in the line of restoration. But the struggle did not end there. The next year, Confucian scholars represented by Lu and Hou came out again to oppose the feudal system. They did their utmost to vilify feudal centralized power and slandered that the rule of "law" was "enjoying the power of punishment and slaughter". They cursed Ch'in Shih Huang as a man "greedy for power" and "obstinate and self-willed". They stood against the dictatorship of the rising landlord class over the restoration forces of the slave-owners. They fanned the flame everywhere in the hope that chaos would prevail. This forced the emperor to adopt further suppressive measures against these Confucian scholars. He arrested 460 who, in his opinion, committed the most serious crimes in 'attacking the present with the past" and 'buried them alive in Hsienyang". This was the "burying Confucian scholars alive" incident.

To a people who distinguished themselves from others on the basis of their historical awareness and literally culture, as John Keay observes in his book *China A History*, the book-burning and the prosecution of scholars were devastating blows(p.97). However, as the same scholar states, the impact of all these was exaggerated. Books at the time were not numerous; nor were readers; and bamboo, although it burnt well, also lasted well in concealment. It means that total suppression of what the Ch'in state regarded as dissident voices was probably impossible. In fact, some of those 'Hundred Schools of Philosophy', even the works specifically mentioned by Li Ssu, survived. The historical records of Ch'in were indeed exempted from destruction, and the fact is that the imperial archive is said to have retained copies of most ancient texts, including the Confucian classics, which, of course, were one of the main targets of attack. Several scholars have held that a greater loss was sustained seven years later (i.e,206 BC) when Xianyang's palaces, including the imperial archive itself, were ransacked by Ch'in's victorious adversaries(See Bodde, 'The State and Empire of Ch'in',pp.69-71). According to Watson, the idea in 213 BC was not to abolish history and literature but to restrict access to them and so, as *Shiji* puts it, 'to make the common people ignorant and to see to it that no one in the empire used the past to criticize the present' (*Sima Qian* in Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian*, pp.69-71).

J.K Fairbank and Merle Goldman in *China A New History*(p.56) have referred to recent scholarship which cast doubt on the question whether the First Emperor, who disliked hearing complaints of scholars, actually had 460 of them buried alive. In fact, Derk Bodde in *CHOC* Vol.I has suggested that the idea came from a mistranslation, and the scholars were merely murdered.

Centralized bureaucratic administration

The Ch'in dynasty was the most short-lived dynasty in the long history of China. However, the brief time span covering a meagre fifteen years cannot conceal one of its major achievements in the history of the world. Ch'in was one of the leading states to develop a centralized bureaucratic administration. The Ch'in state(897?-222 BC) developed into the Chinese empire(221-206 BC) that unified China and consolidated the administrative advances that began in the Warring States Period. This development undoubtedly is a fascinating study not only of administrative history but also of the history of state formation. In fact, the Ch'in case is important not only for its bureaucratization, but also because it shaped the course of the Chinese political history. Both Bodde and Finer hold that many of the administrative innovations of this short-lived empire lasted more than two millennia.

Edgar Kiser and Yong Cai in an article, 'War and Bureaucratization in Qin China: Exploring an Anomalous case' (*American Sociological Review*, Vol.68, No.4, August 2003, pp.511-39) have argued that Ch'in bureaucratization had much to do with war and war and bureaucratization existed at higher levels in China than anywhere else in the world prior to the 17th century, Assiria(883-608 BC), Persia(554-330 BC), Greece under the Delian League(478-404 BC), Roman Republic(509-44 BC) and Empire(27 BC-476 AD), the Byzantine Empire(601-1204/1453 AD), the Ottoman Empire(1453-1918) and others included. Why this was so?

In Ch'in, according to these scholars, the weakening of aristocratic power is the first necessary condition for the bureaucratization. The Spring and Autumn Period(SAP) as the more powerful of them subdued the weak. According to Hsu, there were only 38 peaceful years from 722 to 464 BC(SAP) and only 89 peaceful years from 463 to 222 BC. Thus for China as a whole, warfare occurred 75% of

the time in the five centuries between 722 BC and 222 BC. Wars in the Warring States Period(WSP) involved infantry armies as large as 100,000 to 500,000 and often recorded casualties from 10,000 to 40,000(with a high of 450,000) and lasted months or years, according to Hsu and Lewis. According to one estimate, by the end of the WSP, the total standing armies of the major states approached one million(See Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution*, Cambridge, England, CUP). It is also stated that the Ch'in state was involved in 146 wars between 403 and 231 BC.

The nature of the war also underwent transformation during the WSP. Earlier, wars were fought by chariot-riding aristocrats who generally obeyed rules of chivalry that to some extent limited who and when they could kill. Later, wars were fought by professional generals trying to acquire land and other resources in any way they could, which increased hostilities. Meanwhile, technological advances in weaponry, particularly in the smelting of iron, also increased casualties. Moreover, the development of weapons made of cheap iron initiated a military revolution; it signaled a shift from aristocratic armies using chariots and cavalry to larger peasant-based infantry armies.

As the Wars of Roses decimated the feudal aristocracy in England in the late 15th century, the WSP also decimated the Chinese aristocracy. As the number of states declined in China from hundreds (around 1800) to just one (Ch'in), the vast majority of the aristocrats naturally found themselves on the losing side of wars. In Zhou, aristocratic lineages were the fundamental units of political organization. When one of them was defeated, the other lineages expelled or exterminated it by dividing its land and population (See Mark E. Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, NY, State University of New York Press, 1990). These sanguinary wars devastated the aristocracy, literally wiping out the main barrier to administrative reform. As Finer has put it, "The nobility killed one another off or were shouldered aside by new families who were abler or luckier commanders"(Samuel Finer, *The History of Government*, Vol. I, England, OUP, 1997, p.451). In fact, every defeat or conquest of the state caused the social degradation of some former citizens of the defeated state, and the number of people who were deprived of social status by the Warring States conflicts must have been

tremendous. As Lewis states, "the social order was transformed by the disappearance of the old aristocracy" (p.5).

The decline of the aristocracy and the shift from chariot-based, aristocracy-led chariot-army to one based on mass infantry where aristocrats had virtually no say had an effect on the organizational structure of warfare. The new rulers had to learn how to organize and control large bodies of peasants who provided the backbone of the new infantry army, unlike the earlier period. Henceforth, there started the process of bureaucratization of the army, which weakened the aristocrats further. This is important because, as Kiser and Cai observe, these bureaucratized military organizations would be a model for the administrative reform in the civil state apparatus.

It is pertinent to point out that the bureaucratization of the military was due not just to the shift from cavalry to infantry; it also had a philosophical foundation with the development of "Legalism"—a philosophy that represents another way in which culture affected bureaucratization. The Legalists developed a philosophy of power stressing the role of absolute monarchy and arguing that rule should be based on clear, uniform laws and on strong, non-discriminatory incentives and punishments. It seems that the focus on non-discriminatory incentives threatened and offended the aristocracy, as Guobin Yang states in his article captioned "Review of Zhengyuan Fu's China's Legalists" (*China Review International* 4:389-96). There is thus sufficient ground to assume that these ideas would not have been implemented had aristocrats been powerful enough to stop them.

While accepting the contribution of the Ch'in to the future development of China, one should also point out that the Ch'in dynasty cannot be credited with the creation of the first centralized empire in history. Kiser and Cai have made many interesting comparisons, with at least one important omission. Had they studied the Indian situation in the 3rd century BC, they would have realized that the Arthasastra state that the Maurya rulers built up first under Chandragupta Maurya and his minister Kautilya was a highly centralized, bureaucratic state and it preceded the Ch'in by at least one century.

Artistic achievements

As recently as 1973, the year before the first tentative discovery of at

the Ch'in Imperial Burial Pits, Ch'in's contribution to civilization in the field of art was virtually unknown. However, in 1974, with China's emergence from the stormy years of the Cultural Revolution the first indications of an archaeological discovery amply testified to the cultural achievement under the Ch'in.

It was in March 1974, when local farmers were drilling a series of wells in search of water that the first finds were made. It is calculated that more than 8000 life-size pottery figures of soldiers and horses were buried. Pit no.1 is by far the largest and contains the First Emperor's guardian army with approximately 6,000 soldiers and a small number of horses; pit no.2 contained phalanxes of kneeling bowmen, cavalrymen and chariots while the smallest, pit no.3 contained the command unit composed principally of commanders, officers and a chariot. This impressive and magnificent array was placed to guard and secure the spirit road leading to the entrance to Chin Shi Huang-ti's actual burial situated a kilometre and a half to the west. Such an achievement perfectly matched with his yearning for immortality(For a detailed account, see Edmund Capon, *Qin Shihuang Terracotta Warriors and Horses*, Catalogue to the "Exhibition of the Terracotta Figures of Warriors and Horses of the Qin Dynasty of China" 2nd edition, Sponsored by Mobil Oil Australia Limited Organized by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, no date 1982?).

The characteristics of ideological and artistic expression in these terracotta figures by unknown Ch'in artists are in harmony with the vigorous spirit of the rising landlord class in that revolutionary period. Undoubtedly, they reflect Shi Huangti's policy of stress on farming and war and present an impressive picture of "strong chariots, fine steeds, brave soldiers and sharp weapons". They also embody the idea of the Legalist protagonists—the emulation of "new sages" and glorification of the present.

Peasant revolts

Such a highly centralized bureaucratic state was bound to be based on strict feudal control and exploitation of the people. Corvee and taxation were most onerous during the rule. Regular taxes consumed two-thirds of a peasant's harvest. There was conscription for the army and performance of unpaid labour. It was these that strengthened the

empire and created wealth for the ruling classes. Peasants were forced to fight expeditionary wars, guard frontiers, transport provisions for the army and build the great Wall. According to Chinese sources, the total number of peasants recruited to build the Epang Palace, the Lishan Mausoleum and the Great Wall as also those recruited as soldiers for the defence of the frontier exceeded two millions. A fairly large number of people died working on these projects. Repression begets resistance and it did.

In the seventh lunar month of 209 BC, Chen Sheng and Wu Guang, together with 900 other peasants, were drafted and sent to Yuyang (now called Miyun, Peking) to perform military duties. When the team arrived at Daze Township of Qixian located to the southwest of modern Suxian, Anhui province, there was a sudden downpour, and they could not arrive in time. According to the Ch'in law, late arrival for military duties was punishable by death. At this point, the rebel leaders considered their options. Sima Qian, the historian of the Han dynasty, in his *Records of the Historian* had the following to state on the dialogue among the leaders. Wu argued: "Since we will have to die anyway, why not rise in revolt?" It was an expression of desperation. The other rebel leader Chen took a broader perspective befitting a true people's leader. He said: "the common people have suffered more than enough. So we have only to raise the standard of rebellion for them to answer like an echo". The forcible conscription for military service, exploitation, abject living conditions of the people and now the sure prospect of death incited them into a rebellion. It took place in 209 BC, one year after the death of Shi Huang-ti and ten months after the Second Emperor had been in power.

They staged an uprising at Daze and swiftly took over Chenxian (modern Huayang in Henan province) and announced the establishment of a rebel regime called Zhanchu under Chen Sheng as king and Wu Guang as the military commander. Not only did they rebel; they also called upon the people of China to rise up in rebellion against Ch'in rule. According to Sima Qian, Chen and Wu addressed their comrades thus: "We were delayed by rain and will be executed according to law. Even though we are able to survive this time, we would most likely die when we are kept on guard duty later on. We will die like men and for a worthy cause, if we have to. We can be great men, too. For no kings, dukes, generals and ministers are such

by birth". This anti-Ch'in war led by Chen Sheng and Wu Guang was the first large-scale peasant rebellion ever recorded in Chinese history. It continued for years until it put an end to Ch'in rule in 206 BC. According to Chinese historians, "the idea advanced by Chen, that royalty officers and ministers were not so by birth, was a revolutionary political thought negating the idea of hereditary aristocracy that had been in existence from the days of the Shang and Chou dynasties"(For details, see Bai Shouyi ed, *An Outline History of China*, Beijing 1982,pp.127-132).

Maurice Cotterell, on the basis of the authority of *The Records of the Historian*, points out that a rebel named Xiang Yu(232-202 BC) led a peasants' revolt in around 206 BC. His forces sacked and burnt Ch'in palaces and then turned to the tunnels of the terracotta warriors. There they launched an attack on the silent army of Shi Huangti, looting weapons, smashing warriors and torching the chambers, some of which raged with fire for days. Archaeologists found extensive damage to Pits 1, 2 and 3. But this was put down to natural decay when rotting roof timbers collapsed, smashing soldiers in the north-west chamber below into pieces(See his *The Terracotta Warriors*, p.80). This was an expression of class struggle between the exploited peasants and the Ch'in feudal regime.

In 206 BC, the Chin dynasty gave way to four years of Chu-Han conflict for hegemony before the new dynasty—the Han dynasty—was established.

Glossary

Hsiu	—	Lunar mansions.
Tse	—	Late afternoon when the sun is setting.
Hung	—	Rainbow.
Suan Chu	—	Art of calculation.
Taishi/Taibao	—	Chou minster.
Situ	—	Minister of land affairs.
Sima	—	Minister of military affairs.
Sikong	—	Minister od construction.
Sikou	—	Minister of justice.
Zong Zi	—	Heir-apparent.
Wang	—	Warrior king.
Jingtian	—	Well fields.
Yi/She	—	Rural communes.
Kung-t'ien	—	Land tilled for the State.
Ssut'ien	—	Land tilled for private owners.
Ou geng	—	Method of two men tilling the soil.
Li	—	1/2 kilometre.
Sinan	—	Magnetic compass.
Zhang	—	Measure of length, equalling 2.29 metres.
Zu	—	Ancient sacrificial utensil.
Shen-shi	—	Gentry.
Yang	—	Sheep.
He	—	Growing grain.
Shu	—	Sticky millet.

Su	—	Rice or millet in husk.
Mai	—	Wheat.
Ji	—	Millet.
Mi	—	Rice.
Sang	—	Mulberry.
Ma	—	Hemp.
Ling	—	Granary.
Ting	—	Tripod.
Li, Yen	—	Cooking vessels.
Kuei	—	Food vessels.
Chia, Chueh, Ho	—	Wine vessels.
Mao	—	Spear.
Ko	—	Dagger-axe.
Fu	—	Axe.
Yueh	—	Halberd.
Paopei	—	Sea-shell.
Chung	—	Many people.
Ta fu	—	Senior official.

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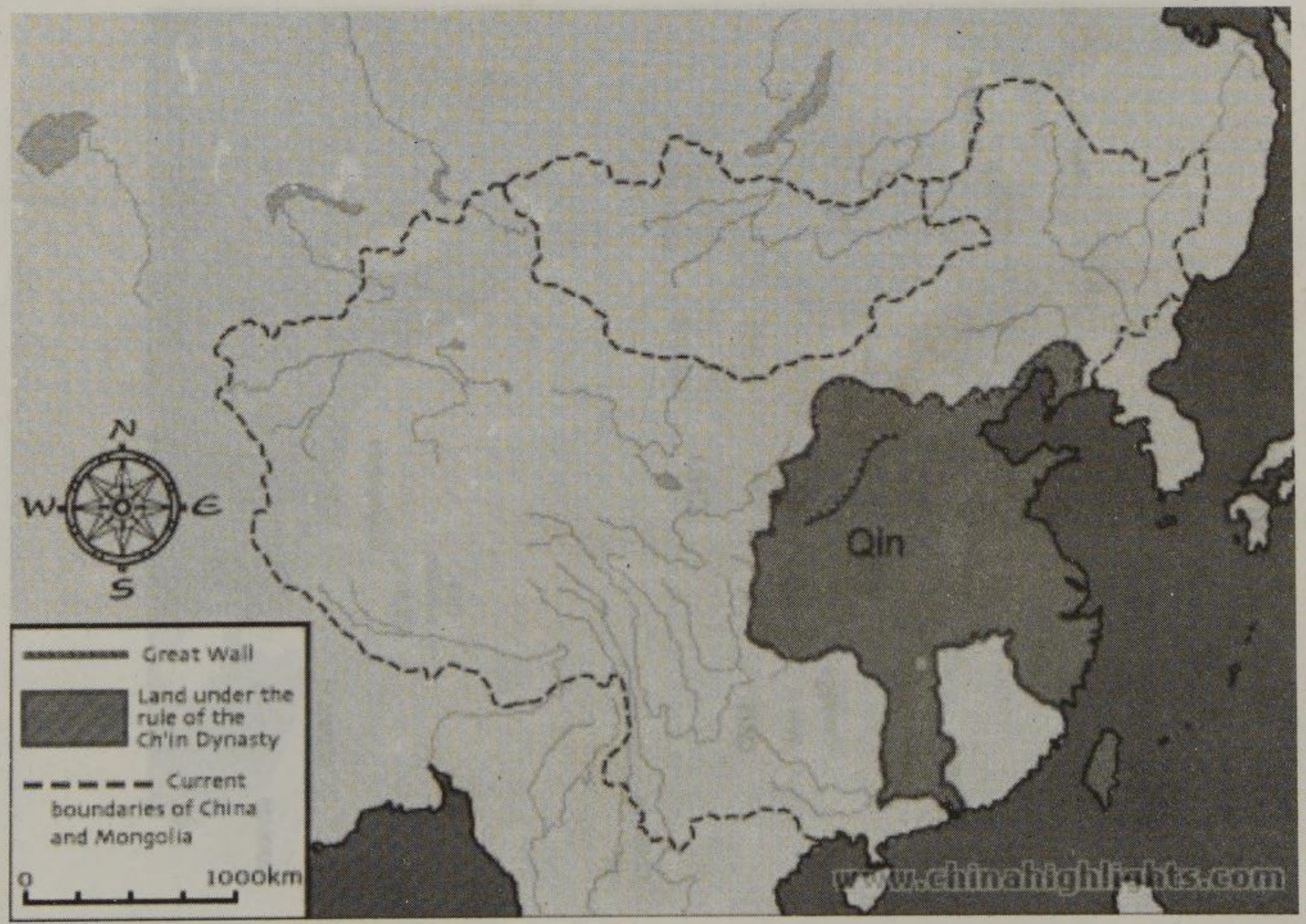
Warring States

Ch'in Empire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Great Wall
Land under the rule of the Ch'in Dynasty
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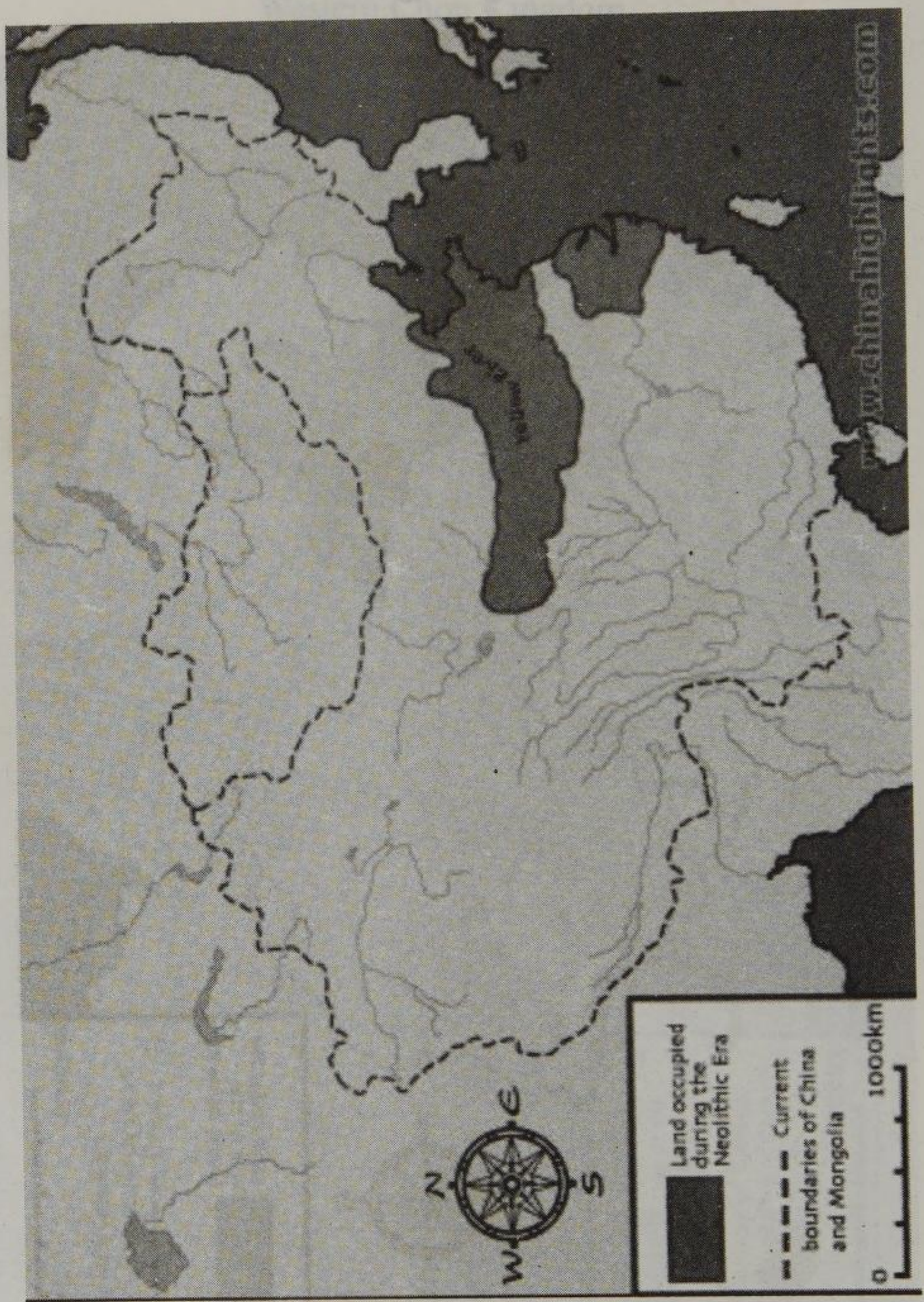

The present book is about the Chinese civilization from the earliest days to the end of Ch'in rule. The period coincided with the emergence of slavery and its transition to feudalism. The dynasties covered in this volume are Hsia, Shang, Chou and Ch'in. It is a long story starting from the abode of the Peking Man on the Dragon Bone Hill not very far from Peking to the lower basin of the Huang Ho River–the cradle of the Chinese civilization in the north, and then to the appearance of the Chinese language, state machinery, the Spring and the Autumn Period and the Warring States Period and the formation of the first feudal empire in China under Ch'in dynasty. The most important of the Hundred Schools of Thought–Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism and Legalism–have been covered in this book. Written in a lucid style, this book will be of interest both to the students and general readers.

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